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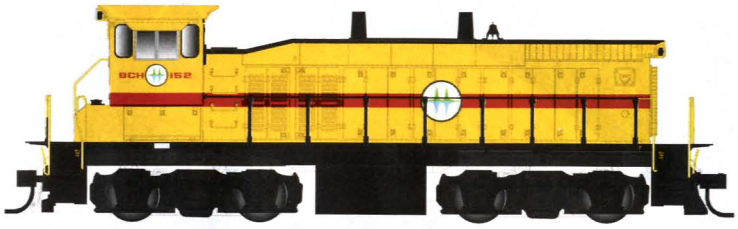
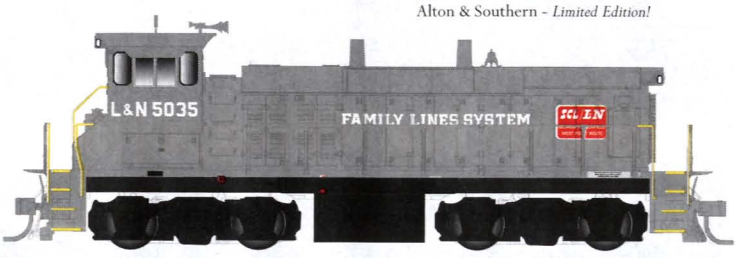
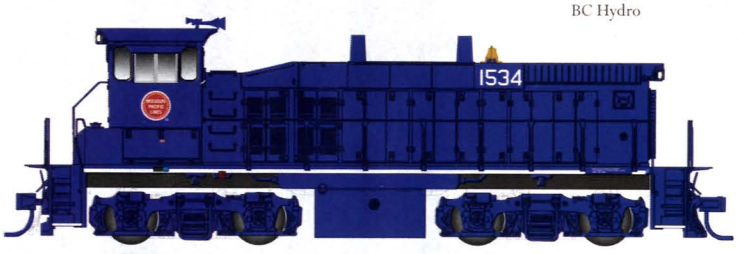


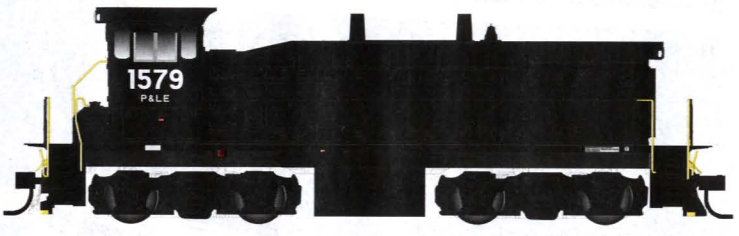
BC Hydro



Family Lines* (L&N)



Missouri Pacific



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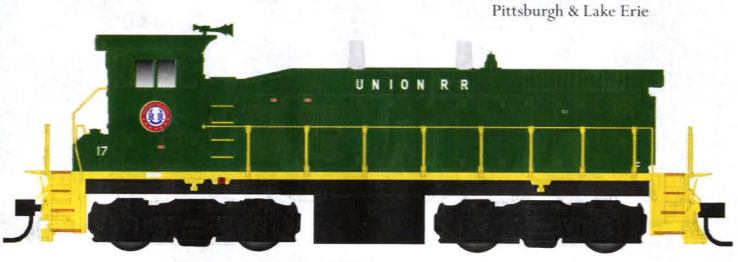

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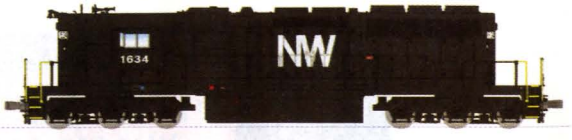

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N SCALE

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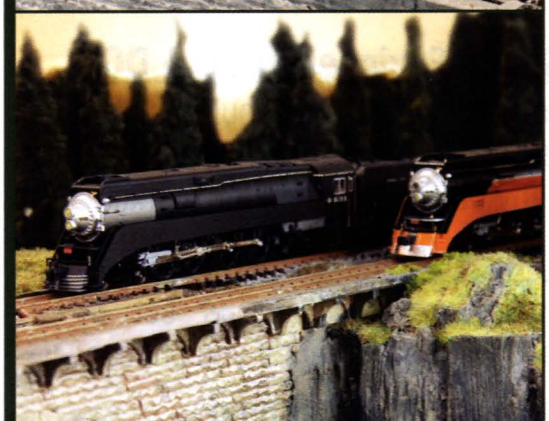

◄ Black GS-4's were still used in Daylight Service, despite the loss of the Daylight scheme

The N scale Southern Pacific GS-4 is back and sporting an all-new look - 1940's wartime-era black paint to reflect a time when GS-4's did more than just passenger service, doing double duty pulling freight as well as moving the Morning Daylight up and down the California coast, having the lettering "Southern Pacific Lines" until as late as 1946 where the lettering changed to a larger "block" style.

◄ Some GS-4's remained black after the war, while others were restored to their original colors

The black paintjob not only made the locomotive less visible from the air, it also meant easier repainting and maintenance when the locomotives got dirty; an easy thing for a big steam locomotive to do, especially when pulling freight duty pulling grain hoppers or coal.

LOCOMOTIVES		
126-0303	4-8-4 GS-4 SP Wartime Black "Lines" #4431	$198
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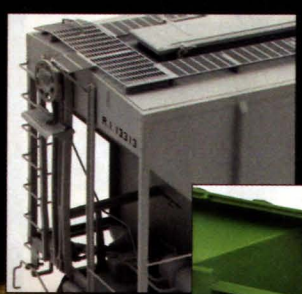

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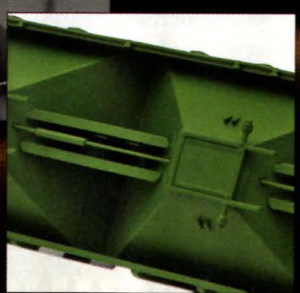

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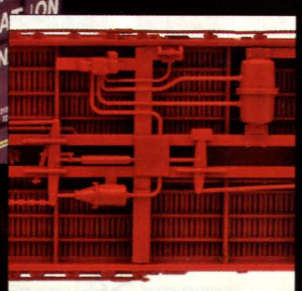
HO Scale



ROADS
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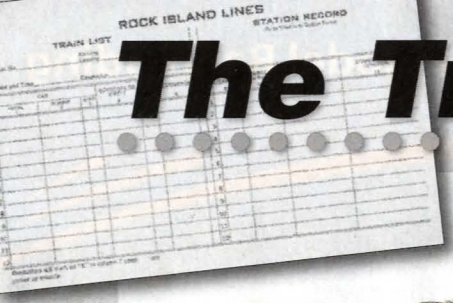
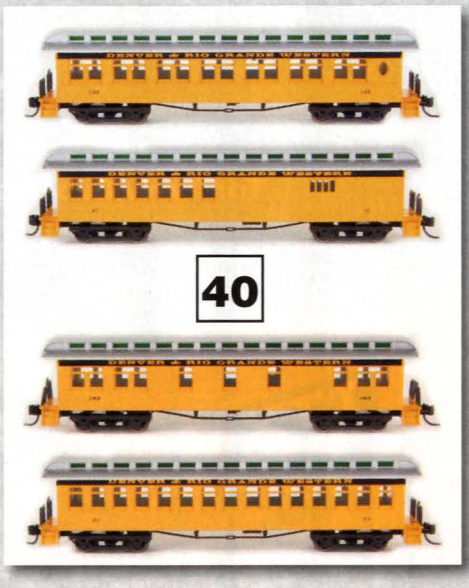
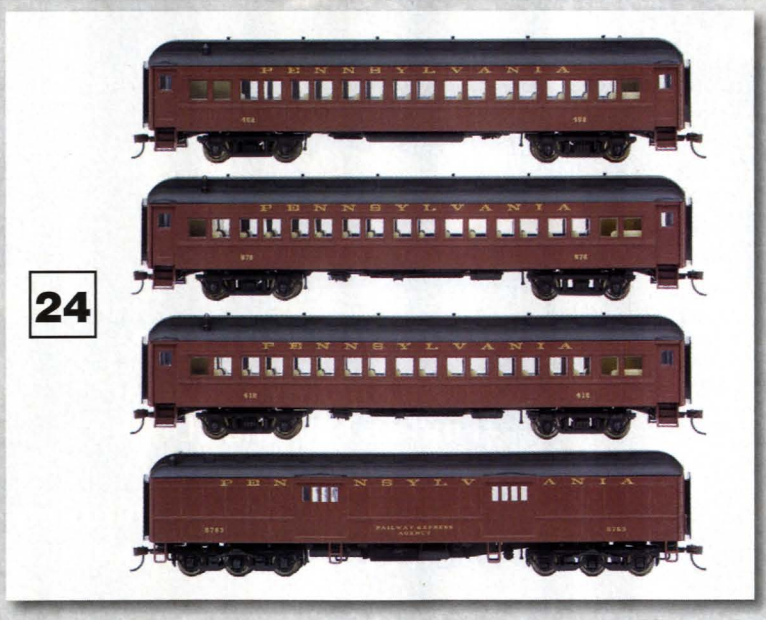
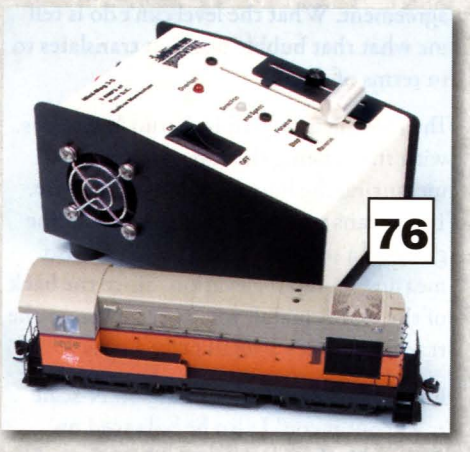


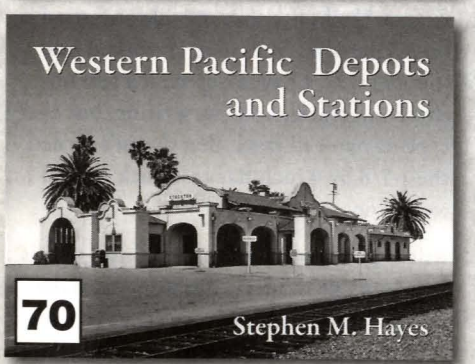


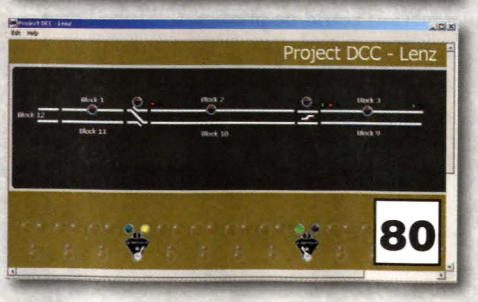


Columns & Departments

S Curves 84
At the Grade Crossing 86
Thinking of DCC 88
Dealer Directory 90-92
Classified Ads 93
Events & Activities 94
MRN: A Year in Review 95
Advertising Index 96







Special Coverage:

MRC Named US Distributor for JTT Scenery Products — 17

Project DCC, Part 10A:
Manual Computer Control with Panel Pro & STP — 80

N-Scale Reviews

Kato Pennsy NW2 Captures Essence of Early Switchers — 18

Athearn Brings Back Old-Time Railroading with Overland Passenger Fleet — 40

Blair Line Section House Kit Adds Unique Structure to Train Yards — 58

HO-Scale Reviews

Rivarossi 60-Foot Passenger Cars Ideal for "BCS" Operations — 24

Athearn Re-Introduces Improved F45/FP45 Cowl Units — 30

River Point Station Ford Expedition Hits the Market in a Big Way — 54

Blair Line Section House Kit Adds Unique Structure to Train Yards — 58

Pennsylvania Heritage Models Track Cover System Creates Old City Inlaid Track — 66

O-Scale Review

Cover Story: Making The Switch To O Scale:
An Introductory Look At What 21st Century O-Scale 2-Rail Model Railroading May Have in Store for You — 48

Large-Scale Review

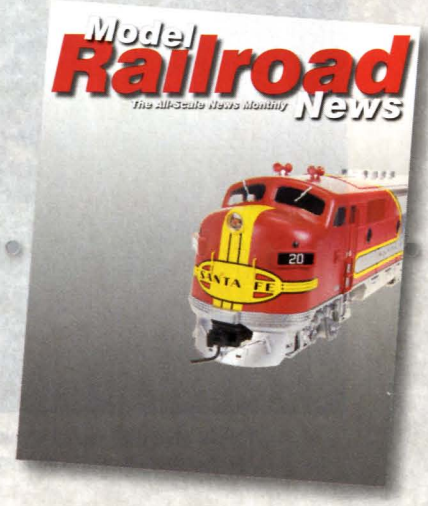
Piko Qwik Kit Structure Kits Transform Garden Railways — 62

All-Scale Review

Bridgewerks Mini-Mag 3-S DC Power Controller Powers Up All Scales — 76

Book Review

Hayes Publishing *Western Pacific Depots and Stations*: A Pictorial History of the Western Pacific — 70



About The Cover: *The Santa Fe Warbonnet F-units are perhaps the most recognized locomotives in history, having been at the forefront of the transition from steam to the diesel-electric. Likewise, these colorful Atlas O covered wagons are leading 2-rail, O-scale modelers into a new era of ready-to-run DCC/sound-equipped motive power. — Photo by Todd Gillette*

Editorial

Leveling with you

I was browsing Apple's App Store, looking for some interesting new toys to load into my iPhone. Then I ran into it, inside of the "Utilities." It has the name "ez Inclinometer." I examined what it claimed to do, its nice, low price of 99 cents, and immediately downloaded it.

That's my cell phone laying face up on a section of N-scale track. No, it doesn't have its ear to the rail listening for the next train— it is measuring the grade and super-elevation of the track.

Originally, my thinking was that I could use it when I leveled our motor home in some far away campground, and it works fine for that, but then I had another thought. When you press the "degrees" button, it switches to "slope," which displays the results as a percent. Slope is defined as the number of inches (or some other linear unit of measure) of rise divided by the inches of run.

Thanks to the magic of surveying, a fellow would walk a hundred feet down the track, as measured by a 100-foot chain. The surveyman would stay with the transit while the pole man would take out a pole with graduated markings to the other end of the chain. The surveyor, knowing precisely how high his instrument was from the ground, it being mounted and leveled on a tripod, could look into it and see where the crosshairs intersected the pole. Unless it intersected the pole at the same height, indicating level ground, it would either rise or fall some number of feet. If it rose four feet, that four would be divided by the chain's 100, producing 0.04 as the result, which can be interpreted as 4 percent. That, of course, is the same math as determining "slope." In fact, you can take any rise or fall and divide it by the run length and arrive at the grade or slope, plus or minus.

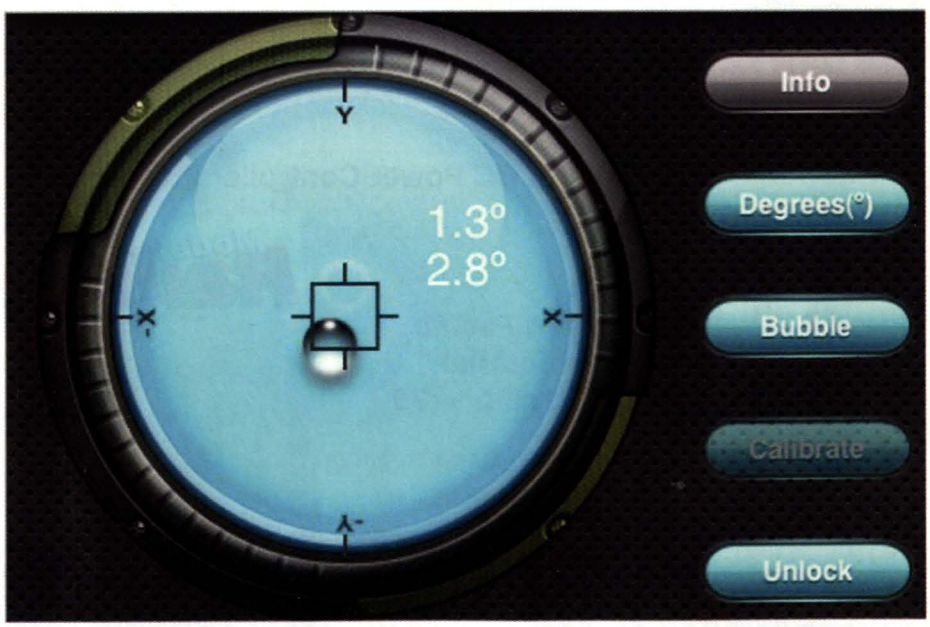
The problem in model railroading is training one ant to work with a tiny transit while another holds up a graduated toothpick, never mind the communication problems. So when I found the "Slope" button, I had a "Eureka" moment. Your iPhone or iPod Touch can become an indispensable leveling and grade measurement tool.

So how can a cell phone measure slope like this? The iPhone and iPod Touch have tiny angle detectors that also measure acceleration. These are used for the touch screen process, but clever programmers have used them for games and other purposes. This little 99 cent application can be calibrated to your device in a simple, four-step process. I've checked the level function against a pretty good quality bubble level, and they seem to be in agreement. What the level can't do is tell me what that bubble position translates to in terms of slope.

The reading is offered in X and Y displays, with the X being the top number, measuring the long direction of the case. This means you not only can measure the grade of a section of track, you can also measure its super-elevation. Since the back of the case is metal, you can't power up the track, but that's a small price to pay.

I have photographed it in use on N-scale track, but it could also be balanced on Z-scale track. I took it outside and tried it on my garden layout, and it worked fine there as well. I haven't given it a run on three-rail track as of this writing, but every type of two-rail track that doesn't exceed the 1-7/8 by 4 inch flat case back should work fine.

This is just another example of using tools from outside model railroading to make our projects easier and more fun. In this case, the source was unexpected, but the reaction could be predicted. Since I don't much care for texting, I'm happy I've found a good employment beyond telephone use for my cell phone.



This is what the display shows, a graphic view of the bubble near the centered box. The numbers in white give you the X-axis on top and Y-axis on the bottom.

— By John Sipple

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Looking for something distinctive for your collection? Want to pull with power on your HO layout? Look no further than the Athearn® Gas Turbine locomotive. Our model accurately translates the massive presence of this historic Union Pacific engine to 1/87 scale.

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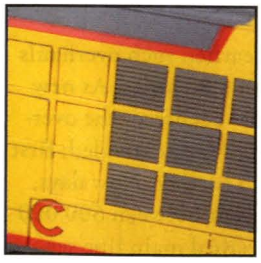
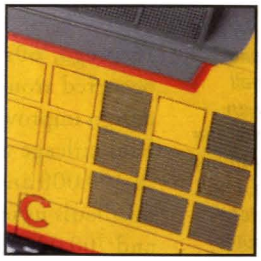
Reserve yours today from your local train store or see the model's photo gallery online at **www.Athearn.com.**

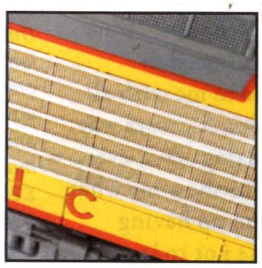


#60 Side Grilles

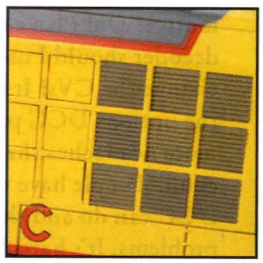


#58 Side Grilles

READY TO ROLL TRAINS Athearn IN MINIATURE



#51 Side Grilles



#54 Side Grilles

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15529

Fresh From The RPO Car

DCC Stands for Dumb, Costly, and Confusing?

I've been a model railroader for over eighteen years now and I have seen a great push by publishers and many other model railroaders to [move to] DCC, which has upset me greatly. Through my experience and the observation of others trying this technology, I have come up with a new definition for DCC — Dumb, Costly, and Confusing.

Dumb: For many years DCC was considered a rich man's toy. Not until recently, it has been pushed as the only way to run a model railroad and the greatest thing since injection modeled plastic. The major two reasons they give for DCC is that you can run more trains at once, and less wiring. To me, unless you are running a museum style layout that is like 100 feet x 100 feet with ten levels, DCC is really not going to benefit you too much.

Costly: Between the main system, boosters, and decoders, it can get very expensive real quick. I once belonged to a club that was transferring over to DCC and I estimate they poured something around $800.00 plus to get the layout running correctly. That was not including decoders and additional hand controllers. The other thing that makes it expensive is the heavier wire and cables you need to make DCC run properly.

Confusing: What address was that locomotive? Did I have it in a consist? What decoder should I use? Do I need to change the CVs? It seems to me with all the options DCC provides, it causes way more headaches than Analog (DC) ever could. People have tried to show me what DCC can do and they end up having problems. It's hard for me not to laugh when that happens.

With all that said, even DCC manufacturers and dealers are not pushing their product as hard as publishers and other model railroaders are. Maybe they're finally realizing they have opened a Pandora's box and how we have been running our model trains since it began some 70 years ago is really the best way to go. I would also like publishers to dedicate equal time to the Analog (DC) operator as well.

Jeremy Vehring
Waukesha, WI

Hi, Jeremy. I found the key words in your letter to be "upset me greatly." I'm sorry such has been your experience, but your letter suggests you haven't switched to DCC, in which case, it shouldn't bother you at all. You also seem to burdened by several misconceptions that people have who don't do DCC.

First, the majority of locomotives are made without any DCC decoder in them, and those with decoders almost universally operate on straight, analog DC power, too. Only a few locos on the market today are restricted to DCC use. More than that, things will continue this way into the foreseeable future because somewhere between two thirds and three quarters of all model railroaders still use DC power (this doesn't count O gauge Hi-Rail AC power.) We always include testing results from operation under DC as well as discussion of that process. Since DCC offers controllable sounds, lights, and the ability to program its features, DCC may generate more words, but that doesn't mean we consider it to be more important.

Second, while running several trains at once and simplified wiring are certainly a part of DCC, there are many other features as well. These range from "equalizing" two locos so they'll run together much better, to letting two locos be operated on the same track without being like synchronized swimmers! I still retain the ability to run DC on my DCC layout, and I do it from time to time, so you're not necessarily leaving DC behind when you go to DCC.

Third, the notion that DCC is only for big layouts isn't true. The basic HO 4x8 layout can take great advantage from DCC. Due to its small size and few locos, it can be operated by an entry-level system, and there are several on the market. You can find these brand new for under $200.00. You could be up and running in a half hour. DCC makes it easy to control remotely located switch machines. The entire layout is one active track, and I saw one where the owner had three locos, and they were all active at the same time, though there was never more than one moving. He ran each one when he got to it, not having to throw switches to power and unpower blocks.

Fourth, the address of the locomotive is the roadnumber, in most cases. Not only is this fairly easy to set yourself, locos are appearing on the market with the roadnumber already programmed as the address. My layout is 6x14 and uses 18 gauge wire all over it. The same two wires I use to connect it to DC are the ones I connect to a Digitrax Zephyr, an MRC Prodigy Express, or an NCE Power Cab, all of these being starter systems.

Finally, despite the problems of the economy, we have an ocean of DCC merchandise being offered by our advertisers, either as systems and decoders from DCC manufacturers or locomotives with impressive DCC sound and light systems. There's nothing here that needs to frighten you. –John

More On 1:1 Scale Locomotive Overhauls

In reference to your response to Robert E. Holland's question in the April, 2009 issue concerning real diesel locomotive overhaul, I think some clarification is in order. The "major overhaul" that you refer to at 15 years (some leases and trusts are longer than 15 years; Oakway's for instance, was 17 years) is more correctly called a re-manufacture in that it usually includes some technology upgrade and must do so in order to qualify for Federal government tax benefits. In fact, a true locomotive overhaul usually occurs more frequently and includes such things a power assembly replacement (pistons and cylinder liners, either new or rebuilt), traction motor rebuild, radiator repair and cleaning, various fan and blower replacement, engine bearing replacement, and possibly an alternator overhaul. Many RRs simply install a previously rebuilt engine, alternator, traction motors, etc., and get the locomotive back on the road as quickly as possible.

Years ago, '60s and earlier, such overhauls occurred around 300,000 miles. As new design improvements occurred, the overhaul mileage was gradually extended; first to 400,000 and then further. Now days, overhauls usually occur between 600,000 and 700,000 miles. (Real main line service locomotives operate between 10,000 miles and 30,000 miles per month.) So, 700,000 miles to first overhaul is roughly three years. Like automobiles, technology has provided longer periods between necessary maintenance. Keep in mind that before the 1970s, the Federal govern-

ment required daily and 30-day inspections. Today, the minimum inspection is quarterly and in some cases, semi annual.

Overhauls, such as described above are done at back shops such as Topeka on the BNSF and Jenks Shop in Little Rock, AR on the Union Pacific. Each major RR maintains such a facility. In addition, there are several third party companies, such as National Railway Equipment and Relco that can also do overhaul maintenance as well as supply rebuilt components. Even without re-manufacture, a diesel locomotive, properly maintained can continue to provide good service almost indefinitely as long as parts are available. On major RRs; however, technology is the usually the deciding factor in determining locomotive replacement. The advantages of new far exceed the value of continued rebuilding. We have certainly seen that in the past couple of decades. Things like AC traction and emissions improvements have provided far more work at far less operating costs.

William Barber
Gravois Mills, MO

I like it, William! This is a more detailed answer than I dared to attempt, and in my brevity, I didn't get it quite right. The process of fleet maintenance on railroads is not only a topic worthy of research, it could also be fun to model on a layout. –John

Board Problems Across The Pond

I have just read with great interest your review of the Athearn Genesis SD60M HO locomotive in the April issue of *MRN*. It brought back some painful and expensive memories. I purchased several of these models last year while on vacation in the US and, like you, I thought they were great-looking models and excellent value for the money (the exchange rate of the pound sterling against the dollar was far better last summer) and I shipped them back home to the UK.

Three of the four were fine but one was not. When I tried to remove the packaging block and the screw from the loco fuel tank, my woes began. The screw had been rammed in so hard nothing would make it turn and so a three-hour battle with it began! My wife and I tried every conceivable way of trying to separate the loco from the restraining screw. Not a chance! Eventually we had to resort to brute force and used a hacksaw to cut through the metal screw. Because we had to wrestle and grip the loco so tight, inevitable damage was caused to the delicate factory-fitted parts. When I finally got to run the locomotive, with half the metal screw still embedded in the fuel tank, it ran noisily and erratically. My wife threatened to instigate divorce proceedings if I even thought of purchasing another of "those heaps" that we had both wrestled with for several hours, and at the end of it all we were left with was a badly damaged model through no fault of our own.

I considered returning it to Athearn but because of the weight of the model, shipping costs, and the bad exchange rate it was not worth it. Just put it down to a bad experience! I do not think I shall be considering any more Athearn purchases for a while, certainly not while they employ this ridiculous packaging system. It is a shame. The SD60M is a great-looking model and very good value for money but not when you have to wreck it removing it from its packaging! I wonder if any more of your readers have experienced similar problems with their SD60Ms. In your review you

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stated that one of your examples had been damaged by insecure packaging but for a different reason to mine.

Clive Monks
Bolsover
Derbyshire
United Kingdom

Hi, Clive, sorry to hear about your difficulties. Our problem was rather the opposite. One of the screws that held the board to the fuel tank had come unscrewed, causing the other to strip out and the loco was then on the loose inside the packaging. The results were both tragic and fatal; the loco never was run and was returned to Athearn's LUBO line.

Model railroaders over here complain that once the loco is removed and the tank shell is installed, they can't transport it in the box. As I understand it, this mounting to a board business is rather common in O-gauge trains, though I've never seen it used in garden-sized equipment except for a couple of extremely heavy locos shipped in wooden crates. From Z to G, the general standard is to pack into a formed piece of Styrofoam or plastic shells that are vacu-formed.

My advice is always that you should send a letter to Athearn, explaining your problem and showing a photo or two of your mangled model. They hate to see a customer unhappy, and they really do care about the problems their customers have. Our Managing Editor, Bill Cawthon, also received your letter and forwarded it immediately to the appropriate folks at Athearn. They are shipping a replacement to you at no charge, and they don't need the other one back. You can park it by the engine house! –John

A Layout Divided By Couplers

I am hoping you might have a solution to my coupler dilemma! I made the decision to go to Fn3 scale partly because of the excellent reviews you did of the Bachmann equipment and also since my Bachmann locomotives are in that scale. Those locomotives, for the most part, have truck-mounted couplers. (Shays, Climax, 4-6-0).

I bought a few AMS products (caboose and flat car) and the body mount couplers on those cars don't come close to the Bachmann locomotive coupler height.

Yesterday at the East Coast Large Scale Train Show I bought my first Bachmann 1:20.3 boxcar. It also has a body mount coupler (and "old style" couplers come in a separate bag, I guess to match up with old style couplers and height).

My problem is that, although I think all the couplers are compatible as to operating with each other, none of these couplers (AccuCraft, Bachmann rolling stock, or Bachmann locomotives) line up in height, and I am sure they will not stay coupled outdoors due to uneven track.

I'd appreciate your opinion on how I might proceed to get all the couplers at the same height. I'm willing to replace couplers or shim up/down, but I really want to do it right the first time!

Dave Smith
Hicksville, NY

Hi, Dave, with a layout divided by its couplers, you need a standard around which to center your efforts. I like to use the Kadee G-scale Height Gauge #880 (http://www.kadee.com/htmbord/height.htm), because its height is based upon prototypical coupler height. As it happens, standard gauge and 3-foot narrow gauge have their couplers at two different heights, but since most of us either model standard gauge in 1:29 or 3 foot narrow in 1:20.3, the scale difference takes care of the height difference. If they were built to the same scale, then the couplers would have to

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be a separate height, a problem the Rio Grande handled by using locos or special flat cars with both on one end.

The Kadee height gauge sets the couplers at one height which happens to be close to proto for both standard in 1:29 and narrow in 1:20.3. It is actually five tools in one. I require all cars and locos on my layout to have couplers that are either genuine Kadee body-mounts or else a type of coupler that plays reliably with the Kadees. I once wrote an entire series of articles (it's been most of seven years since) on "Couplers That Work," and in there I discussed my frustration with having a layout divided by couplers. By using the Kadee gauge and being fairly demanding about it, I have over a hundred pieces of rolling stock that will all play with each other.

Body mounts are best for me because the Oregon Pine Belt Railway has all ten-foot diameter curves but requires backing trains through switches into long sidings for storage. If all you do is run short, little trains on tight curves, you can switch all of your rolling stock to Kadees that mount on the coupler tang of the truck. Truck mounts won't work well on long trains because they may POP, which is my term for when the tang on one coupler bends up slightly while the mated coupler's tang bends down enough that they pop off of each other. This isn't the coupler's fault; truck mounts are only for short trains that don't get backed very much.

Bachmann's new Fn3 graft gear fulfills a vision I've had where a manufacturer delivers rolling stock with couplers that work. They have to be scale height as determined by the industry-standard Kadee 880 Gauge, and they must couple reliably to a Kadee which is built right into the 880. The New Bachmann Standard meets this goal, and they deserve a lot of praise, especially since there will be forces trying to get them to retreat to the old, low couplers. As it is, Kadees and the new Bachmanns play well with each other, and everything else is iffy. Be prepared to cut, file, shim, doctor, drill, and devise solutions. Always keep some Kadees handy in case it comes time for replacement.

The old Bachmanns, the LGBs, both types of Aristos, the USA standard and most others WILL NOT work with Kadees or the new Bachmanns because they adhere to a low coupler height standard based upon using those couplers with the mechanical uncoupler ramp built by LGB. Often, the coupler design is incompatible, even if mounted at the proper height. Despite the cost of retooling and all of the griping from various guys who don't want to change, 25 years is an awful long time to perpetuate a mistake. Model railroaders deserve one, single standard for their couplers. We have it in Z, N, HO, S, and O where it's all based on the proto height. Kadee gives us that standard for Large Scale. Once you get used to it, you're gonna love it! –John

Questions about CMW's 1954 Ford F-700

I received a couple of CMW's new 1954 Ford F-700 Tank Trucks recently, and was disappointed in the model. They obviously took their F-350 cab, placed it on their IHC R-190 chassis with a very nice tank body. But there are differences between the F-350 cab assembly and an F-700. The cab, fender, hood, and grill assembly of all F-100 through F-350 is the same. The F-500 – 600 is similar, but has a larger front wheel opening, larger toward the front to accommodate the 20-inch 5- or 6-bolt wheels used on these trucks, but the F-700 through F-900 Big Job models use a much wider fender and grille. The hood is probably the same. My truck literature collection is still in storage after a recent move, so I can't tell you how far off the model is right now.

The front wheels both stick outside the fenders — not good! Plus the front end looks pinched in this way.

A proper F-600 (2 ton) may be possible by narrowing the front track and

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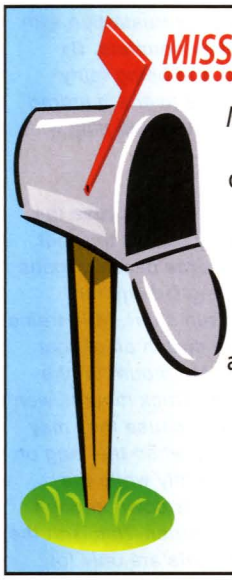
adding Athearn 5 or 6 stud steel disk wheels from one of their C series trucks, which are available separately. Sorry, I am a wheel freak. Or it might be possible to laminate a layer of styrene to the outside front fender surface and file to the proper Big Job contour.

CMW has taken some shortcuts on some other models, for example, compare the size of their F-1 pickup with their F-1 panel truck. The panel is much smaller, but they both are well proportioned, just don't place them side by side. I think I have several samples of all their vehicles, and most are good, well proportioned models, except for their White WC-22, etc. truck. It is very poorly scaled and proportioned. Models are like women, proportions are more important than size, generally.

Jim Scott
jamesescott@suddenlink.net

Hi, Jim, you're absolutely correct; the measurement across the front fenders should be about eight feet, typical for a truck of this size. I measured the CMW truck and its width is about 79 scale inches. You'll also notice the bumper is wider than the fenders (though that, like the front axle, can be trimmed). I am hopeful CMW has plans to issue the tank body and chassis with their International R190 or White WC-22 cabs, either of which will make a better-looking model.

By the way, if you haven't checked them out yet, you should take a look at the CMW F-350 Utility and MOW trucks. I think it's the best release of the F-350 yet. –Bill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JTT Scenery Products are available at hobby shops throughout the country. For complete details, visit MRC online.

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Kato NW2s for Pennsy Fans

Review by Steven Goehring
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FOR fans of eastern railroads, good things come in small packages. Kato USA has just released its successful NW2 switcher painted for the Pennsylvania Railroad. Kato has released two roadnumbers, No. 3909 and No. 5912, although these were in fact the same machine, only renumbered. Their choice of roadnumbers allows modelers to accurately depict one of EMD's early 1,000 horsepower switchers from 1941 to 1966. Each NW2 features Kato's magnetic knuckle couplers, golden-white directional LED lights, a detailed cab interior, and provisions for a drop-in Digital Command Control decoder. The NW2 is also being offered in Milwaukee Road paint, and has previously been released in AT&SF, CB&Q, B&O/C&O, SP, and UP.

Alone Among 31 Sisters

The Electro-Motive Division of General Motors introduced the NW2 switcher in 1939, using the new 567A diesel engine. In the old Electro-Motive terminology, NW2 stood for Nine hundred horsepower (which was not entirely right, the NW2 had 1,000 hp), Welded frame, and 2 was a model designation, because EMD had built a few NW-type locomotives before. Railroads started buying these switchers, finding them reliable and economical in yard and switching service. But in the eyes of the U.S. government, they were inferior to the American Locomotive Company's switcher offerings. As World War II enveloped America, Electro-Motive was ordered to cease production of all switcher locomotives and focus on their FT road diesels. The NW2 would make a post-war comeback and enjoy several more years of uninterrupted production. Finally, the SW7 replaced the NW2 in Electro-Motive's locomotive catalog at the end of 1949.

In the late 1930s, the Pennsylvania Railroad put in an order for a few EMD switchers, including one NW2. Pennsy's only pre-war NW2 was delivered in October of 1941, as Electro-Motive serial number 1426. This was the lone NW2 on the Pennsylvania roster until postwar units were delivered in 1946. Delivery of PRR NW2s continued sporadically until 1948. Pre-war and early post-war production NW2s were distinguished from most of their post-war sisters by the lack of side louvers. The PRR's lone prewar unit, 3909, was renumbered twice while under PRR ownership, becoming PRR 5912 in 1942 when it was also given the locomotive class designation of ES-10. The Pennsy terms for the NW2 stood for Electro-Motive Switcher with 1000 horsepower.

The 5912 finally switched numbers again in 1966, before the Penn Central merger, becoming number 8677. It passed on to the Penn Central, where it was rebuilt into an NW2M and renumbered to PC 9171, retaining that number into the Conrail days. All early EMD switchers on the Conrail system were out of service by the early 1990s, ending a half-century of service from this diminutive, yet very useful, machine.

Kato's NW2

Kato has nailed the PRR NW2 model, getting the locomotive's dimensions right on target. All lengths, heights, and widths were exact, many within fractions of a scale inch. The best example of this Kato precision is the hood width, where my caliper read 0.525 inches. That's an exact 7 scale feet, matching the Pennsylvania Railroad's own measured drawing of the NW2 perfectly with no rounding!

The locomotive matched all applicable NMRA standards, including wheels, clearance size, and coupler height. The tiny wheel flanges on the NW2 had no problem with various brands of Code 55 track, yet they did not exhibit a tendency to derail, either. There are no instructions or assembly diagrams included with the NW2. You can order parts from Kato's web site, or check there to read more details on Kato's 60-day warranty.

Details on the NW2 are a logical compromise between things that varied on the PRR's sole pre-war NW2. There are no side louvers, making this unit distinctly pre-war, and other details are done such that conversion to match a particular era is easy. The 3909 was delivered with short exhaust stacks that only came up to about half the height of the locomotive's bell. These stacks were replaced by the typical conical EMD stacks, probably for continuity with the postwar NW2s. For modelers wishing to convert theirs, it would be easy to pull the Kato stacks out of the hood, cut them short, and drill a hole in them to match the as-built stacks. Also,

By-The-Numbers

EMD NW2
Kato
N 1:160 • Type: Diesel
Traction Tires? No

Pull Power (Ozs @ Full Slip)

Pull	÷	Loco Wt	=	Efficiency
0.32		1.62		19.75%
Volts		Amps		
10		0.11		

Analog DC

Start Volts = 1.8

Volts	Amps	Scale MPH
2.0	0.04	3.95
6.0	0.07	43.90
10.0	0.08	86.51

DCC

Stall Amps 0.30

Speed	Step (of 128)	Scale MPH
Min	1	0.66
Mid	63	56.56
Top	126	110.30

Is that a model photo or a 1941 company advertisement? With the great looks of Kato's N-scale NW2, you might not be able to tell. It's more likely to be a company illustration, perhaps, because PRR never owned NW2s numbered 5912 and 3909 at the same time: the 3909 was renumbered to 5912 in 1942.

the as-delivered 3909 had an equipment box (like the PRR's typical cab signal box) just ahead of the engineer's side of the cab. That box is left off of the Kato model, but that's a logical choice, as it was removed (probably in 1942) and is not seen on the other PRR NW2s. The air horn, handrail, and headlight details all remained accurate even through the NW2's rebuild under the Penn Central, when it traded in its friction-bearing trucks for roller bearings. Kato did a great job in executing all the details on the NW2. Most notable are the walkways with molded tread on them, the very fine and thin handrails, and also the freestanding side handrails. The detailed cab interior is also a great touch.

From my research, I found that Kato could consider making more roadnumbers of NW2, or modelers could renumber theirs to historically run two NW2s together. EMD produced a few postwar NW2s without side louvers from when production resumed in early 1946 until October of that year. The PRR received unit No. 5821 in April of 1946, so that unit should also fit Kato's body style, and photos of No. 5822 show it without side louvers, so the November 1946 unit should also be fair game.

Digital Control for the NW2

When Phil Scandura looked at the first release of Kato's NW2, he described it as "a fine addition to the yard switcher selection in N-scale and would look great on any layout." He was reviewing it under straight DC control, because decoders for this tiny switcher were not yet available. Today, there are two DCC decoders to choose from, and once you put one into your NW2, its weak slow-speed performance vastly improves. It goes from a fine model to a must-have yard switcher.

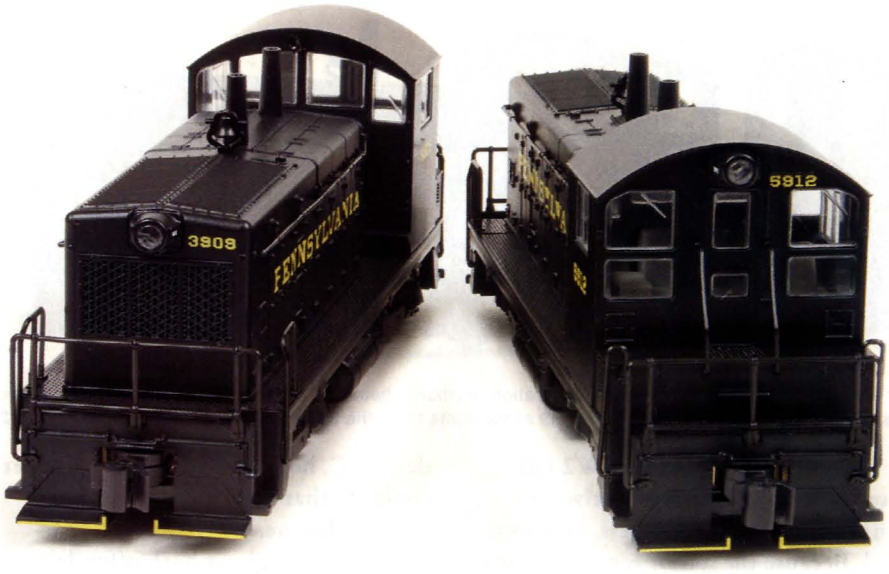
Under DC control, the NW2 falls short of Kato's other locomotives in running quality, smoothness, and noise level. Because the motor is on top of the front truck, it requires an additional set of gears to put pulling power to the rails. These extra gears create extra noise, and I found that opening the locomotive mechanism and applying Labelle 106 plastic-compatible grease to the gear made a big difference in the noise level. Still, I couldn't get the locomotive to operate smoothly at anything under 4 scale miles per hour, whereas other Katos I own, even older ones, will easily run below that speed. The top-end speed was around 85 scale MPH, twice the top speed for a real NW2, but still well below the average for N-scale diesels.

For more information on the Kato NW2's performance under DC control, see Phil's review in the May 2007 issue of *MRN*. I did most of my testing under DCC, hoping that a digital decoder could fix that slow-speed smoothness problem for me.

TCS and Digitrax both offer drop-in decoders to replace the NW2's light board. I've had much better experience with TCS' speed control in the past so I naturally opted for their K3D3 decoder. I knew the NW2 needed some improvement on the lower end of the speed range, so I selected the decoder I expected to best address the problem.

Installing the decoder is simple, but you must be careful. The NW2's chassis is held together mostly by the body shell, so once you remove that (simply by pulling it up and wiggling it free), you must be sure to remove the trucks and electrical contact strips before they fall out unexpectedly. The fuel tank and cab interior/rear headlight pipe will usually separate from the chassis when removing the body; you should fish the interior

The Kato's NW2 is one of N-scale's most accurately scaled locomotives. You can see here how it sits low on the trucks, like full-scale locomotives, and its handrails are very fine, yet durable. Go ahead, take a caliper to it; I did, and everything scaled out extremely well.



Yes, Virginia, you can see right through the NW2's cab! Look closely and there are two molded seats and a control stand in there, too, with room to easily add an engineer figure. Despite the open cab, the rear headlight and number boards light up just like the front ones. Kato's manner of using a plastic "light pipe" to guide light from an internal LED to the rear headlight is one of the NW2's coolest features.

With a motor mounted atop the front truck, the Kato NW2 drive mechanism includes some extra gears that can create substantial noise if not properly greased. Still, the mechanism is solid and strong, especially considering its size. The ability to replace that light board you see pictured with an aftermarket DCC decoder is probably the NW2's best selling point.

out of the cab body and set them both aside for when you reassemble the model. Next, take the two motor clips off of the Kato light board and save the clips. You can then separate the frame halves and pull the old board out, replacing it with the TCS decoder. Be very careful once the decoder is in place! The tiny LED lights on each end are delicate, and I managed to break one trying to shoehorn the decoder in without pulling apart the frame halves. Once the frame is back together, put the motor electrical contacts back on by wrapping the motor end around the motor brushes on either side then clip the electrical board side onto the decoder. Reinstall the electrical contacts and trucks back as they were, making sure that they are properly aligned. Then put the fuel tank and cab interior back in place to hold the frame together, and test the decoder. If it all works, put the body shell on, set the locomotive on your layout, and start running it!

After installing the K3D3 decoder from Train Control Systems, I saw the minimum consistent speed of the NW2 go from 4 scale miles per hour to nearly half a scale mile per hour. That truly unleashed the locomotive's potential. A switcher that cannot smoothly start or stop a train will make operations difficult and unrealistic. TCS' decoder brings the NW2's performance up to par with its excellent appearance, without even having to mess with speed table programming. If you want to extend the usable range of the throttle, you may want to program the top end speed lower, as NW2s were not designed to exceed 45 MPH.

The slow-speed improvement is largely thanks to TCS' consistently good implementation of Back EMF (Electro-Magnetic Force). Back EMF allows a

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decoder to emit rapid pulses of power to the motor, making it run smoothly at lower speeds than is possible on direct current (DC). Some decoder makers omit Back EMF entirely, or implement it in such a convoluted way that users must experiment for hours to achieve performance half as good as a TCS decoder.

Switch It Up, Digitally

I was very pleased with the DCC speed testing in the By-The-Numbers box, so I enthusiastically fired up the NW2 for the daily rounds of delivering freight cars to customers along my compact railroad. My first impressions were very good. It moved reliably even at speed step 1, roughly 0.6 N-scale miles per hour. That made couplings very easy. Another first impression was that the lighting is very nicely done. The headlight and number boards on each end light up in pure white, thanks to TCS' tiny LEDs and Kato's clever light pipe. My third "first impression" is a piece of advice for you: use a bit more momentum than you usually would for a yard switcher. The NW2's flywheel is small and between the sensitive motor and the decoder, the locomotive can be a bit jumpy from speed step to speed step. Once I upped the momentum values, I had a very smooth switcher. On a side note, my NW2 did struggle with the grade leading up and out of the yard, but I easily handled it by simply backing up and getting up more momentum. The pull power of Kato's little switcher is very reasonable for a locomotive of its size, just remember that it will decrease noticeably as your grades get steeper.

Once out of the yard and onto the customer sidings, the NW2 continued to impress me. Its appearance stood out on a finished model railroad: in particular, I was impressed with the thin handrails and the lack of an annoying gap between the body and the trucks. I could couple and uncouple very smoothly, thanks to precise and consistent speed control and the magnetic knuckle couplers. The couplers occasionally needed a nudge from an uncoupler tool to get them to fully close, but they held on to Accumate, McHenry, and Micro-Trains couplers very well and could uncouple from them hands-free quite often. I was able to pull cars onto and out of tightly curved sidings with ease, also reliably handling switching moves requiring the delayed uncoupling mode.

Final Thoughts

I've enjoyed running the Kato NW2 enough that if I got into a switching skill contest with my model railroader friends, I'd choose the NW2 to handle it. Kato did a fabulous job detailing the model and fitting a reliable drive mechanism into it. Labelle gear grease fixed the noise problem, and the TCS DCC decoder fixed the jerky slow speed, leaving a model that is a true winner in all categories. I recommend a TCS-equipped Kato NW2 to any DCC user who has space for a good switch locomotive on their railroad.

What's my final thought on Kato's NW? "Nice Work!"

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New auto car kits from Speedwitch

HO — Speedwitch has released two new automobile car kits for the Pere Marquette and Chesapeake & Ohio. The kits feature one-piece cast resin bodies with Hutchins ends, etchings, and accurate decals. Modelers will need to supply their own couplers and wheel sets as the kits do not include trucks or couplers.

The Pere Marquette (#K111.1) 88000 – 88350 series single sheathed automobile/boxcars, and Chesapeake & Ohio (ex-PM) (#K111.2) 288000 – 288350 series single sheathed automobile/box car kits retail for $43.00 each.

The Pere Marquette purchased two groups of single-sheathed automobile cars in 1926 and 1927. These cars closely followed the ARA single-sheathed design of the era, including the pressed steel structural members and ARA underframe. The cars also used Hutchins Dry Lading roofs, Camel wood doors, and the unusual Hutchins ends with rectangular pressed steel corrugations. The first 350 cars (88000 – 88349) were built in 1926 by National Steel Car Company of Canada. The last 1,000 cars (88350 – 89349) were built in 1927 by Pressed Steel Car Co.

The first group of cars used ARA cast-steel sideframe trucks while the last 1,000 used the Dalman two-level design. In 1947, when the PM became part of the Chesapeake & Ohio, the cars were renumbered by adding a "2" to their existing numbers (e.g. PM 88000 became C&O 288000). Also, many cars had their auxiliary doors sealed beginning in the late 1930s and "SINGLE DOOR CAR" stencils added to the door.

The kits are available now.

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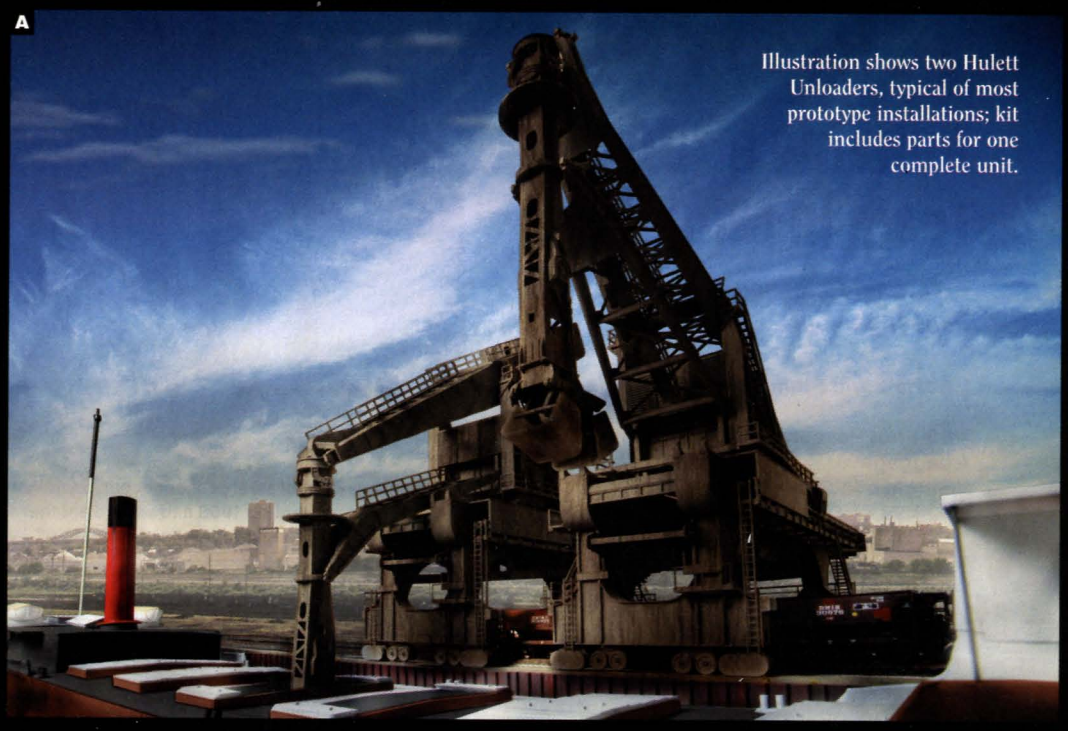

Illustration shows two Hulett Unloaders, typical of most prototype installations; kit includes parts for one complete unit.

B

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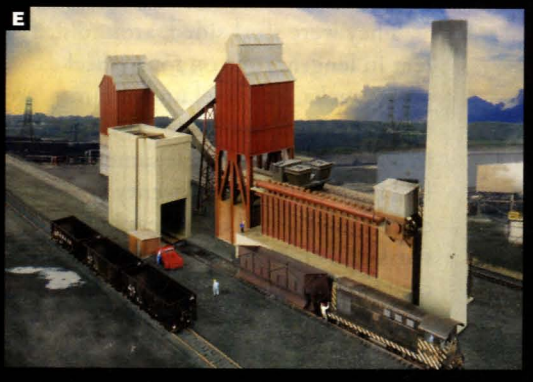

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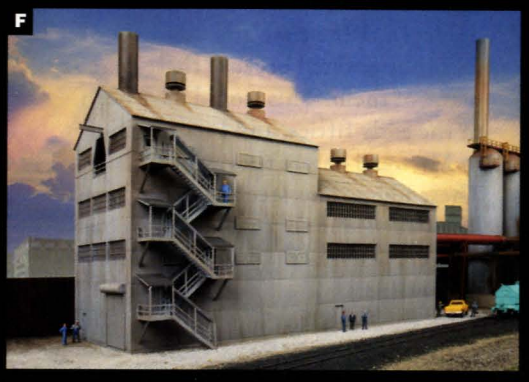

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Review and Photos by John Sipple

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This is a classic 60-foot steel passenger car, commonly used in branchline, commuter, or suburban service. They first appeared around 1908 and served another sixty years in local operations. For model railroaders, this is a dandy car for tight radius "plywood sheet" layouts.

Branchline work would see an express car quite commonly, and suburban service might see one for occasional parcel service. Such front-end cars were rather rare on "scoots" (commuter service). Many smaller baggage/express cars used the same sort of express trucks found on the coaches.

BCS CARS — That's what I call them. These cars were originally built for a fairly restricted market. Branchline, Commuter, and Suburban services had a need for this type of car, hence the letters "BCS." It's really a matter of economics. These cars were first introduced into American railroading in the first decade of the Twentieth Century, and even at that time they were never intended for mainline, interstate service.

They were steel-sided, around sixty feet in length, rode on four-wheel express trucks, had steel underframes, and offered closed vestibules. This set them in contrast to cars of the same size that had been constructed twenty years or so earlier. These had open vestibules and truss-rod underframes along with more ornate windows and wooden construction. When wood cars proved to be unsafe, the railroads branched out to steel heavyweights of seventy or more feet in length, concrete in their bellies to improve the ride, and the consequential six-wheel trucks — and they also constructed the BCS cars.

As a rule, BCS coaches carried sixty to seventy passengers packed in like airline coach passengers today. Cross-country coach service put fifty passengers in seats that reclined for much greater comfort, and they rode much better, too. Branchline runs of fifty or sixty miles with a dozen stops along the way would find passengers on and off the train, few of them riding the whole distance. Often times, these short, rural trains included a baggage/railway express car and might also have a milk car, if there was dairy service along the way. Commuter and suburban trains featured five or six cars at rush hour and would be pulled by anything from a Ten-Wheeler to a Pacific. The idea of the lighter-weight BCS car was that more passengers could be handled with lesser locomotives, saving in fuel and fare while improving acceleration.

As a boy, I saw Chicago & North Western commuter "scoots" spreading out north and west of Chicago. I was ten or eleven at the time and almost took them for granted because there were so many of them. This would have been in the early fifties, and I moved south to Missouri before they were finished. These ubiquitous steel BCS cars very likely earned more passenger revenue per seat per year than even the deluxe streamliners!

Modeling the BCS Car

Rivarossi is back, under the watchful eye of Hornby, an old and honorable model railroad manufacturer. The name of Rivarossi goes back to the early days of HO trains, but it fell on hard times as it was passed around like an unwanted stepchild. But no more of that! Papa Hornby has taken home the prodigal son and is patiently regrowing the brand. The sixty-foot coach line is a good place to start.

I get letters all the time from modelers with small layouts, dismayed because all they seem to see are big locos pulling big cars. They want something smaller, more compact, something that doesn't look silly going around small layout curves. Have I got something for you! The sixty-foot coach and its companion baggage/express car are just the ticket. With a three car set, a fourth car sold separately, plus the head-end car, you can build a five car branchline train or a four car "scoot," all of them having different numbers.

The ideal locomotives for such a train would be a sort of modern 4-4-0, a 4-6-0 Ten Wheeler, a 2-8-0 Consolidation, or even an RS-1 Alco diesel road switcher. The steamers would take your timeline back to 1910 while the diesel and some of the steamers would go all the way

forward to around 1960. The initial offerings are two roadnames: Chicago & North Western in Pullman green and black with gold lettering and Pennsylvania in Tuscan red and black with gold lettering. There are five cars in each complete set: four coaches and a baggage car.

The Coach Car

The riveted metal portrayed in styrene is one of the first clues that this isn't an old-time car. The closed vestibule is another. A quick look along the belly finds no sign of truss-rods but does suggest a center-sill underframe. Appliances beneath the floor are few, with just the airbrake equipment and fresh water supply tanks. Steam would have been sent down a steam line from the locomotive to provide heat in the winter. The clerestory roof vents would stir the air in the summer.

Outwardly, there are eighteen windows to the side. At one end is the men's room that occupies half the width of the car and about one window space in length. Opposite that facility is a lengthwise bench seat. At the other end, the women's room takes up two window spaces and is opposed by a similar bench seat.

Window glazing reveals the seats and bathroom arrangements in the interior. The wheels are metal but have no built-in electrical pickup, so these would be prime candidates for a battery-type lighting system. The couplers have a compound swing to them, with the normal plastic coupler spring working with a longer drawbar spring to give considerable flexibility. The diaphragm at each end is nicely spring-loaded, but the coupling distance and diaphragm reach don't span the gap between cars, even when all the slack is taken in.

The Baggage Car

This item is equipped with six-wheel trucks. While it's more likely this length baggage in rural service would have four-wheel trucks, the six wheelers are a nice touch, too. It reminds us that Rivarossi is prepared to crank out some 72-foot heavyweights on these same trucks.

It may be easy to say that the interior of a baggage car needs no detail at all, given the four tiny windows at the top of each door, but the detail is here. The car is divided into approximate thirds, with the center section being between the doors and devoted to an REA clerk. The two sections at either side have their own baggage door and compartment, plus there is a bathroom on one end.

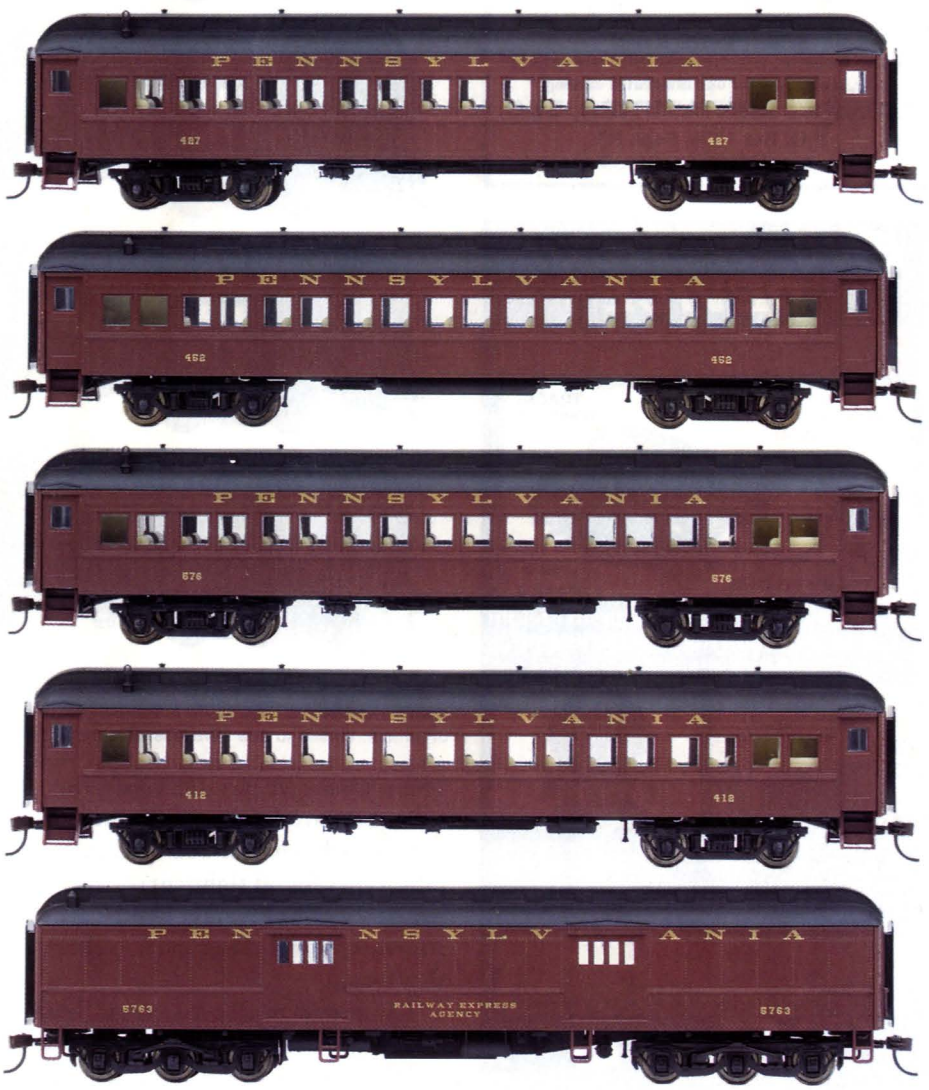
Coupling remains the same, as do the metal wheels with no electrical pickup. Both cars come with a bag of small parts, those being a pair of X2F "hornhook" couplers (and a few folks still use them), plus some wire grab irons. If you choose to install them, it's #80 drill bit time, and I'd suggest you have several before you start; they break easily. Experience with this issue has led me to the conclusion that such installations take very good magnification and lighting, immense patience, the right tools, and some very good modeling skills. Or you pay someone else to do them.

The model railroad world is divided along any number of dimensions, but the one between installed and do-it-yourself passenger car grab irons is pretty well defined. There are top-notch products on the market that sell for a comparable price point that have them installed, and so some buyers just don't want to be bothered with installation. That said, I didn't install the wires because, at 66 years old, I just can't do this stuff anymore, so I'll run them without the grabs, and you can too, if you wish.

Operations

In keeping with my original premise that these cars would be welcome to the small layout operator, I gave them a run around Track One, the loop with 18-inch radius curves, accessed via #4 switches. First, I can report to an anxious world that they had no problems at all. I led them with a variety of power and these cars did what good cars do: follow along politely.

They roll well, without wobbling, but there's an even better surprise.



Here are the five cars of the Pennsylvania series: three coaches in a set, one more coach and the express car, each available separately. This offers considerable purchasing flexibility.

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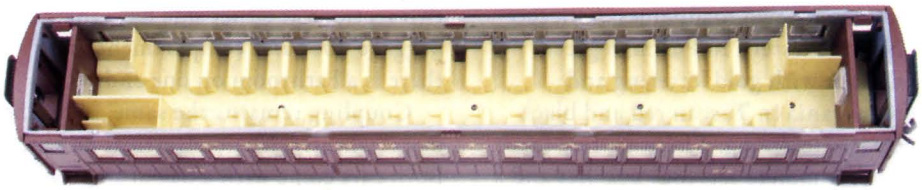

A look down inside of a Pennsy coach shows the detailed interior. If you wanted to paint the inside and install little figures, that would be easy enough. Aftermarket battery-powered lights could be added and are turned on or off with the wave of a magnet wand.

The Chicago & North Western collection starts with a three-car set of coaches, a single coach car, and a single express car. You could purchase just the three-car set, the three-car set and one of the other cars, or all five. I'd like to see Rivarossi add a combine version for rural service.

These passenger cars don't have the ridiculous overhangs that bother longer cars on tight curves. Too often, the prototypes found tight curves and restricted switches, that being part of the reason for making them as short as they were.

I pushed them at speed around Track One, very much of a worst-case scenario, and they did just fine. These cars were constructed before the days of push-pull service, but I've seen photos of a dozen or more commuter trains waiting to back into the station, so they got backed quite a bit.

And the winner is...

The cars meet the Plate C standards set forth by NMRA, and the wheels are in gauge, while the couplers are an acceptable height. Recall that the letters of my choosing are B for Branchline, C for Commuter, and S for Suburban runs. If you have BCS trains to run, these cars could well be winners for you.

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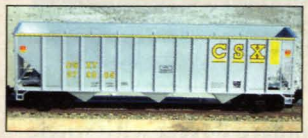

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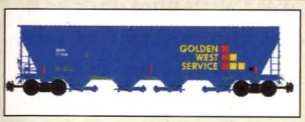

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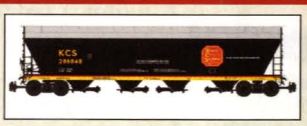

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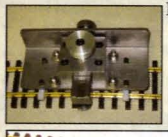

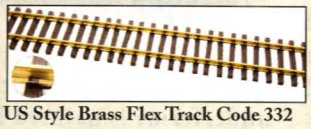

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New Rolling Stock from Micro-Trains

Z, N & HO — Micro-Trains has released a 40-foot standard boxcar, two 50-foot standard boxcars, and two 50-foot gondolas for Z scale. In N scale they released a 36-foot wood sheathed ice reefer, two heavyweight depressed center flat cars, a 40-foot standard boxcar, a 40-foot boxcar for the ninth president, an 89-foot tri-level closed auto car, two 50-foot standard boxcars, and a 56-foot general service tank car. A 30-foot flat car has been released for HOn3.

Z Scale

This 40-foot standard boxcar with plug door decorated for Nevada is the eleventh car of a 50-car series representing each of the 50 states in the union. It bears the Mountain Bluebird and Sagebrush, Nevada's official state bird and flower. The flag of the state of Nevada is in the background. The road-number 1864 represents the year the 'Silver State' was admitted into the union. The boxcar (#502 00 511) retails for $22.95.

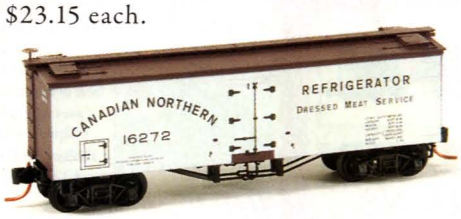
Two 50-foot standard boxcars with plug doors have been released for Canadian National. They are painted brown with white "wet noodle" logos and lettering. CN 401806 and 401822 were built in January 1987, serviced in March 2003, and run on Roller Bearing trucks. The cars display the English "Canadian National" on the right side of the car, and French "Canadien National" on the left side. A note under the tack board indicates this car was used for paper service. The boxcars (#507 00 411 and #507 00 412) retail for $22.20 each.

Two 50-foot gondolas with fishbelly sides and 50-foot scrap loads are now available for Norfolk Southern. NS 191337 and 191339 are painted black

with white logos and lettering. They were built in December 1996 and run on Roller Bearing trucks. These gondolas are specialty open top cars with fixed sides, fixed ends, and solid bottom. They're equipped with steel cushion underframe and fabricated steel girders for coil steel. The gondolas (#522 00 201 and #522 00 202) retail for $22.60 each.

N Scale

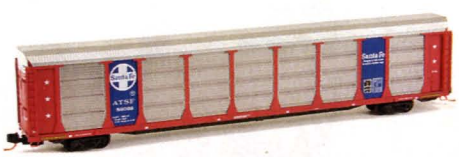
Two heavyweight depressed center flat cars have been released for Southern Pacific. They are painted boxcar red with white lettering. SP 500502 and SP 500516 were built in June 1958, serviced in January 1959, and run on Buckeye trucks. The cars from this short series were built and originally run on the Texas & New Orleans R.R. (T&NO) in 1958 and numbered into series 19101 – 19120. Fifteen cars were brought over to the Southern Pacific and renumbered in January 1959. The final five of the new series were added in 1962. The flat cars (#109 00 091 and #109 00 092) retail for $23.15 each.



A Canadian Northern 36-foot wood sheathed ice reefer with modern steel underframe is painted boxcar red with white sides, black herald and side lettering, and white end lettering. CNR 16272 was built in 1910 by the Crossen Car Manufacturing Company (CCMCo) of Coburg, Canada, and runs on arch bar trucks. By the end of the teens, the Canadian Northern Railway (CNoR) had become a constituent part of the Canadian National Railways, which was formed in 1918. By the time this car was constructed, the CNoR was the only customer of the CCMCo and in 1915, when Crossen closed its doors its final units were also destined for the CNoR. The reefer (#058 00 080) retails for $25.70.

A 40-foot standard boxcar with single door and no roofwalk has been released for Chicago, Burlington & Quincy. CBQ 34236 is painted green with white lettering. It was built in June 1945, serviced in August 1969, and runs on Bettendorf trucks. When the cars entered service as CB&Q #39675 – 40634, all were painted in the pre-merger Cascade Green paint scheme. The plan was to add the word NORTHERN below the BURLINGTON, but by the time the merger was consummated, the font had changed to a thinner style, so these cars never received the full merger name. The boxcar (#024 00 310) retails for $15.10.

The ninth car in a 44-car series representing each of the presidents of the United States is now available. This 40-foot standard boxcar with plug door and no roofwalk bears the portrait of our ninth president, William Henry Harrison. The car comes with a commemorative pin replicated from that era. Harrison became the first president to die in office when he died of pneumonia 32 days after his inaugural celebration. Harrison's father signed the Declaration of Independence and his grandson became the 23rd president of the United States. The boxcar (#074 00 109) retails for $23.95.



An 89-foot tri-level closed auto car is available for Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe. The auto rack is painted red with

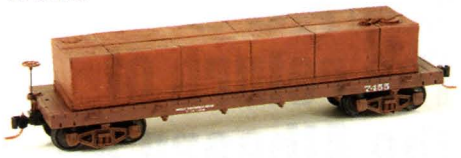
blue placards and aluminum roof. Logos and lettering are in white; excess height message is in black. ATSF 88099 was built in 1976, serviced in December 1978, and runs on Barber Roller Bearing trucks. The first auto racks had exposed sides that led to vehicle damage from vandalism and weather; in the early 1970s the railroads started to enclose them with steel mesh. Tri-level racks continued to be used predominantly for automobiles, while the bi-level racks were primarily used for light trucks and vans. Auto Racks are one of the most commonly seen cars on the railroads today. The auto car (#111 00 130) retails for $42.60.

A 50-foot standard boxcar with single door and no roofwalk has been released for Conrail. It is painted brown with white door. Lettering and logo are white. It was built in 1968 by Pullman Standard, serviced in December 1980, and runs on Barber Roller Bearing trucks. Created in 1976, Conrail was the recipient of fleets of boxcars from its predecessors. #208875 is ex-Erie Lackawanna #63553, built as a general service boxcar by Pullman-Standard. The car has white doors designating commodities to be eaten, "FEED FOR LOADING ONLY." The boxcar (#077 00 180) retails for $16.85.

A 50-foot standard boxcar with single door is now available for New York Central. NYC 92102 is painted light blue with black roof and ends. It displays a white and blue logo and white lettering. This car was built in May 1957 by American Car & Foundry, serviced in September 1958 and runs on Bettendorf trucks. Just two cars were assigned to Flinkote Company service (92101 & 92102), receiving this NYC experimental scheme of black roof and ends with unique blue paint on sides and white lettering. A few months later, the NYC began painting their freight cars NYC Century Green. The "DF" initials on the door let the customer know this car offers damage free delivery of customer cargo. The boxcar (#031 00 310) retails for $17.15.

A 56-foot general service tank car has been released for ADM Transportation. ADMX 29867 is painted black with white and blue logo and white lettering. It was built in November 1988 by American Car & Foundry of Milton, PA, and runs on Barber Roller Bearing trucks. In November of 1988, ADM Transportation Company ordered 85 class 111-A-100-W-1 non-coiled/non-insulated tank cars built on Lot #18-14356. The primary difference between the various types of DOT-111-A-100 class tank cars is internal with varying types of insulation, lining, and even weld material. Class W-1 types would generally carry such commodities as gasoline, or vegetable oils. The tank car (#110 00 020) retails for $25.25.

HOn3



A 30-foot flat car is now available for Rio Grande Southern. Number 7455 is painted boxcar red with white lettering. It was built in 1910 and runs on Bettendorf trucks. Originally built for the Colorado and Southern as stock cars in the 1910, these cars were stripped down to their decks and used as flat cars on the Rio Grande Southern shortly after being acquired by that railroad in 1938. Today, much of the former Rio Grande Southern rolling stock has new life in tourism, including Knott's Berry Farm's railway. The flat car (#855 00 050) retails for $35.30.

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The main difference between an F45 and FP45 is the inclusion of a steam generator on the FP45. This image illustrates this difference in hold length when comparing the AT&SF F45 (shown below) with a pair of FP45s.

By-The-Numbers

F45 (ATSF 1939)
Athearn
HO 1:87 • Type: Diesel
Traction Tires? No

Pull Power (Ozs @ Full Slip)

Pull	÷	Loco Wt	=	Efficiency
4.1		12		17.3%

Volts	Amps
12	0.38

Analog DC

Start Volts = 9.0

Volts	Amps	Scale MPH
9.1	0.17	15.9
10.5	0.19	41.3
12.0	0.22	71.2

DCC

Speed	Step (of 128)	Scale MPH
Min	8	7.8
Mid	64	62.4
Top	128	104.2

By-The-Numbers

FP45 (ATSF 107)
Athearn
HO 1:87 • Type: Diesel
Traction Tires? No

Pull Power (Ozs @ Full Slip)

Pull	÷	Loco Wt	=	Efficiency
4.7		27.5		17.1%

Volts	Amps
12	0.38

Analog DC

Start Volts = 9.0

Volts	Amps	Scale MPH
9.1	0.16	11.1
10.5	0.20	43.9
12.0	0.24	67.7

DCC

Speed	Step (of 128)	Scale MPH
Min	8	7.9
Mid	64	57.4
Top	128	101.7

By-The-Numbers

FP45 (MILW 2)
Athearn
HO 1:87 • Type: Diesel
Traction Tires? No

Pull Power (Ozs @ Full Slip)

Pull	÷	Loco Wt	=	Efficiency
4.6		27.0		17%

Volts	Amps
12	0.37

Analog DC

Start Volts = 2.7

Volts	Amps	Scale MPH
2.6	0.12	10.9
6.0	0.17	45.9
12.0	0.19	108.4

DCC

Speed	Step (of 128)	Scale MPH
Min	1	0.4
Mid	64	51.1
Top	128	102.0

THE F-Cowls are back, and after a long absence from their HO-scale catalog, Athearn has brought back the 45 Cowl Units, the EMD (Electro-Motive Division) F45 and FP45, but these units are much different. The original Athearn F45 and FP45 models were of the blue box variety, now they are part of the Genesis line. Athearn has not only just brought them back, but returned them as a totally new re-tooled model.

The first part of the release features the Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe (Santa Fe/ATSF) F45 model finished in Santa Fe blue and yellow freight paint. The second portion of this release features the FP45, in Santa Fe Warbonnet and Milwaukee Road (MILW) Hiawatha colors. All models were released in three different roadnumbers as well as in an undecorated version and available in either DCC (Digital Command Control)/Sound or standard DC Analog. Athearn also recently announced that beginning the end of summer the F45 and FP45 will include a Tsunami Sound Decoder. The first of these models are expected in late August.

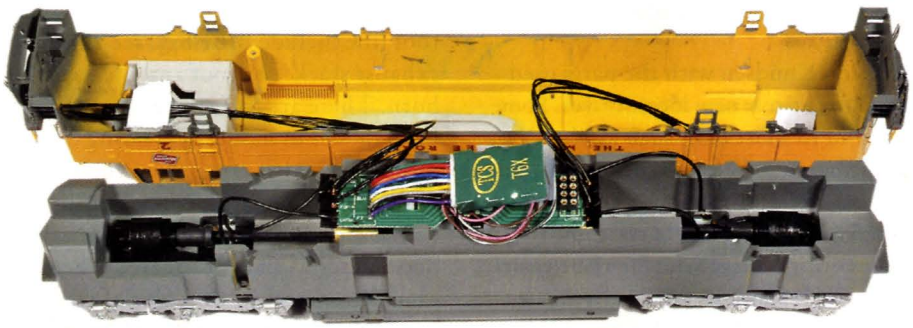
The EMD FP45

The development of the FP45 was a direct response to Santa Fe's search for replacements of their aging fleet of F3 – F7 passenger locomotives. They wanted a new streamlined locomotive that would match their passenger car fleet, but all that was available stock from the manufacturers were freight locomotives with steam generators added. The result of this specification produced the EMD FP45.

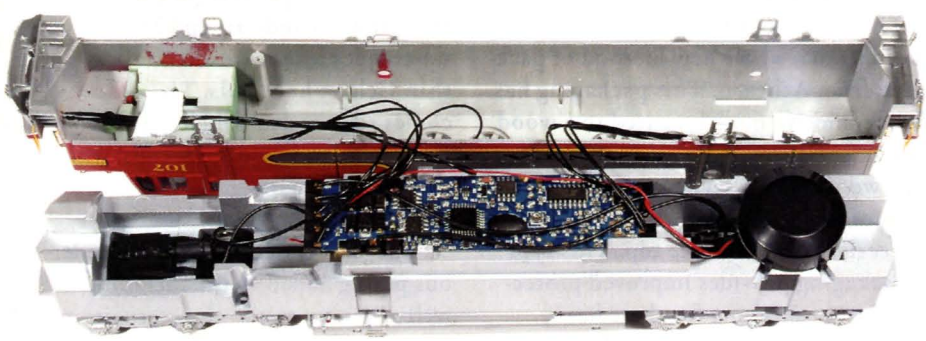
The first build of FP45s were nine units delivered to Santa Fe between December 1968 and January 1969. This group was delivered in the famous Santa Fe Warbonnet and assigned roadnumbers 100–108. The FP45 was based on the 3,600 Horse Power (HP) SD45 freight locomotive, powered by the 20-cylinder, 645E3 Prime Mover. The FP45 featured a full width cowl car body and was a total of five feet longer than the SD45, at 72-feet 4-inches. This extra length was necessary to fit the steam generating equipment inside the hood as the 20-cylinder prime mover took up all available space on the standard SD45 frame. The FP45 locomotives were also equipped with a large fuel tank partitioned to hold 3,000 gallons of diesel fuel and 2,000 gallons of water for the steam generator. The major benefits of the full cowl body design included reduced wind resistance, an enclosed walkway to provide a safer environment for the crew, and a cleaner engine compartment as the panels sealed better than compartment doors.

For the first two years the Santa Fe FP45s would serve on high visibility passenger trains until the inception of Amtrak (May 1, 1971). Afterwards they were re-assigned to freight service and at times, special passenger trains. Through the years their appearance would change through rebuilds, re-paintings, and re-numbering. One unit was lost to a wreck in 1981, and the remaining eight would serve the railroad for as little as 27 years to more than 30. Of the remaining eight FP45s; one would be sold for scrap (ATSF 106), one sold to Wisconsin Central (ATSF 101), and the remaining six went to museums.

Milwaukee Road was the only other railroad to purchase the FP45, with a total of five units delivered in December 1968. These units were assigned to the popular Hiawatha passenger train run between Chicago and Minneapolis. They looked much different than the Santa Fe FP45s as they lacked dynamic brakes. Like the Santa Fe units, these locomotives were assigned to their intended high profile passenger duty until the arrival of Amtrak. Afterwards they were tasked to freight service and would see new paint to reflect this change in assignment. The MILW units would only last until 1984, when they were sold for scrap.



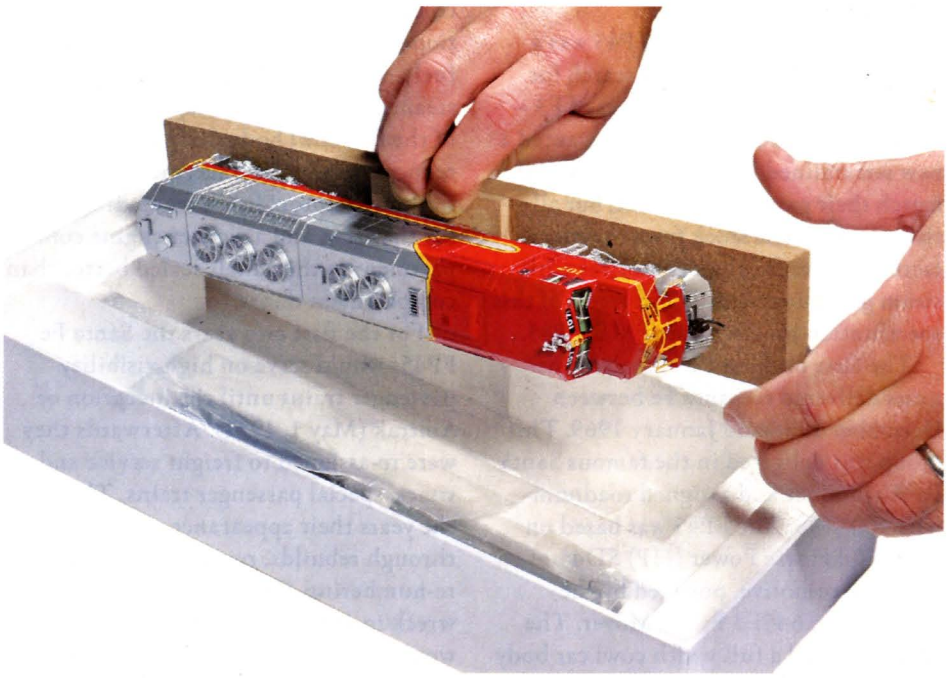
Installation of the DCC Decoder is as simple as removing the shell to gain access to the DCC jumper board. The TCS T6X decoder has been installed in place of the Jumper Board. The compact design of the TCS decoder leaves plenty of room to spare between the shell and chassis. This chassis offers plenty of room for the decoder and two milled out slots for Athearn Genesis style speakers If you want to add a sound controller with speakers.



Under the shell of the DCC Sound-equipped unit is the chassis mounted Sound/DCC decoder, a speaker, and wires leading to each individual light bulb. The FP45 underframe takes advantage of the full cowl body width to extend the height of the chassis, thus producing a heavier model. Mounted above the motor is the DCC/Sound controller board with the speaker placed to the rear side.

The EMD F45

Nearly six months after the introduction of the nine FP45 models, Santa Fe took delivery of the freight version of the FP45; the F45. These locomotives were significantly shorter than the FP45 as they were not equipped with a steam generator. Mechanically they were the same locomotive as the SD45, except with the obvious difference being the full cowl body. These locomotives were delivered to Santa Fe in two groups, roadnumbers 1900–1919 and 1930–1939, with the later group equipped with pass-through steam lines so they could be used as trailing units on passenger trains or lead units



The removal of these models takes a little finesse and patience. The first step is to pick up the wood base at the center and wiggle it side to side while the same time grabbing one of the ends to gain additional leverage to remove the wood mounting assembly from the Styrofoam packing. Lift the wood base straight out and clear of the packing. The locomotive model comes packed attached to a wood base which protects the model by supporting it in the packing as well as keeping it from shifting during shipment. To remove the locomotive from the wood base you'll first need to set it in a soft cradle that will both support the model and protect it from damaging the detail parts. NOTE: Leave the plastic wrapper on the Styrofoam packing so the detail parts do not snag on the foam. Remove the screws holding the board while the model is inverted in a foam cradle and undo the center fuel tank screw from the chassis. Locate the fuel tank wrapped in a plastic wrapper in Styrofoam packing, remove from the wrapper, install on the chassis and secure using the screw removed from chassis.

with steam generator cars. All 40 locomotives were delivered in the Santa Fe blue and yellow freight paint scheme and a straight 4,000 gallon fuel tank.

The other railroads to purchase the F45 model were Great Northern (GN) and Burlington Northern (BN). Great Northern first took delivery of 14 F45 locomotives in August 1969 with them assigned roadnumbers 427–440. A second order followed for another 12 units, but were delivered after the GN merger with BN in Cascade Green and numbered 6614–6625. Later BN took delivery of an additional 20 units in April and May 1971 in roadnumbers 6626–6645. These units brought the total GN/BN F45 fleet total to 46 units, giving them the largest fleet of F45s.

For the next 15 years, the BN F45 fleet generally operated on northern tier freights between Chicago, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Seattle, and Portland. As each unit approached their 15-year-lease-equipment-trust expiration date, BN started to retire them as part of a program to eliminate 20-cylinder locomotives from the fleet. Most BN F45s were scrapped, and many of these went to Morrison Knudsen with the parts used to create entirely new locomotives. Some were sold to short lines such as New York Susquehanna & Western, Montana Rail Link, and Wisconsin Southern. The 40 Santa Fe F45 units would continue to haul mainline freight during their entire service with Santa Fe until early 1994, when the railroad started to retire them from the roster. A few were sold for scrap, some were sold to Wisconsin Central and Utah Railway, and many were sold to Helm Financial and Morrison Knudsen to be leased back to Santa Fe.

The Models

The release of these models introduced us to a whole new method of packaging from Athearn. This packaging has the locomotive model secured to a wood base assembly by two machine screws. This wood-mount setup is cradled inside a Styrofoam box insert with a plastic protective cover over the top. This type of packaging provides improved protection during shipping for these heavy locomotive models. With the F45 model weighing in at 24 ounces and the FP45 at 27 ounces, the need for stability during shipment is more necessary than ever. The knock against this packaging is the time and effort it takes to remove the model from its packaging.

The three sample models provided represent three out of the four roads that originally received the 45 Cowl Units. Each model is very much unique in their own way, with differences ranging with the types of windows, intake screens, fuel/water tank size, and equipped steam generator, with or without dynamic brakes or steam generator. When looking at these models one cannot miss the superb intake grills lined along the top edge of the cowl body. Most of the grills/screens applied to the model are of the photo-etched metal variety with the screen style differing between roads. The grills on the MILW unit are EMD type grills while the Santa Fe units use Farr type grills.

The top side of the locomotive is dominated by the cooling fans and steam generator (FP45s only). The cooling fan cowlings are thin with a fine photo-etch screen grill top with fan blades visible below. The FP45 steam generator extension includes numerous well detailed vents and stack that are nothing short of outstanding. The other details across the roof line include lift rings, see-through exhaust stack, cab roof antenna, and air horn. There are differences in cab detail from model to model depending on the prototype which range from the type of air horns used, the antenna, headlight configuration to the shape of the cab door window (oval or square). There are even differences in the color of the cab windows; with the Santa Fe F45 and FP45 windows tinted green, while the MILW FP45 windows are clear.

The front pilots of all three models include the "as-delivered" Santa Fe style tapered sheet metal pilot. Some railroads later would remove these and add on a standard snowplow. Both the front and rear pilots include air and MU hoses, un-coupler levers, treaded walkway and thin Celcon handrails. The nose includes separately applied wire grab irons, headlight, and sand filler caps, while the rear includes more grab irons and a rear access door.

The chassis details include numerous piping added to the fuel tank as well as piping to the air reservoirs and filter. The Santa Fe F45 model correctly includes a bell while the FP45 units do not, as they instead were equipped with electronic bells. The side frames are well

A view from the rear reveals the differences in the three models with the obvious being the steam generator equipped MILW and AT&SF Warbonnet units. Other differences are the inclusion of a rear door window and classification lights. Also note the lack of dynamic brake fans on the center Milwaukee version.

cast and detailed with separately applied brake cylinders and a speedometer cable on the left front truck. The fuel tanks contain separately applied filler spouts and fuel gauges. The left side of the fuel tank also includes step cutouts and two grab irons for access to the middle access door. When handling the fuel tank, be careful as the fuel fillers will brake off easily if you bump them.

Overall, the level of details added to these locomotives exceeds most other plastic locomotives in both quality and quantity. From top to bottom, front to back, these beauties are packed full of details and are very accurate compared with the prototype. There are a few things they could have added on such as: etched steps, piping between the brake cylinders, or they might have gotten the windshield wipers to sit flatter on the windshield. These issues are mild in comparison to all the excellent details included on these models.

The paint finishes on the samples have been applied effectively and evenly with the Santa Fe FP45 silver and red Warbonnet bright and distinct while the gray and yellow on the MILW FP45 is a good match compared to the photos found. The color separation lines are sharp and crisp on all the samples. The yellow billboard lettering on the Santa Fe F45 is strong throughout with no weak variations in yellow pigment. The Celcon colored handrails on the end platforms are solid in pigment and are a good match to the shell colors.

Performance - DC Analog

The MILW FP45 sample locomotive provided is a straight DC Analog type with the ability for simple conversion to DCC. During the DC Analog tests the model performed in a smooth manner with very little noise from the drive system. The speed at the high end was quite a bit faster than the abilities of the prototype while minimum sustained speed was a bit high at 10 SMPH (Scale Miles Per Hour). The directional lighting is provided through the combined function of both the DCC Adapter and Jumper Board, which are both located above the motor.

The DCC decoder added to this locomotive model for testing was the Train Control Systems (TCS) T6X decoder. The T6X decoder was chosen for the locomotive mainly for its ease of installation; low profile and the BEMF (Back Electro Motive Force) performance with Athearn drive systems. The BEMF circuitry gives the decoder the ability to monitor motor performance and adjust the voltage to keep the motor speed consistent. This decoder was installed directly to the nine-pin NMRA connector that was formerly occupied by the Jumper Board.

The benefits of the T6X decoder are immediately apparent once the locomotive is put in operation as the BEMF circuitry goes to work to keep the speed consistent despite the presence of curves, track imperfections or other increases in load. The effects of the BEMF circuitry are also evident in the lower speed ranges as reflected in the test results where the average speed at Step 1 (of 128) was 0.4 SMPH. Throughout the entire speed range, the model performed consistently and quietly, although the top speed was exceedingly high. If this is a problem, the Maximum Voltage variable, CV5 (Configuration Variable 5) can be adjusted.

DCC/Sound Units

The Santa Fe F45 and FP45 samples are DCC/Sound units which can be operated in either Analog DC or DCC mode as the onboard decoder has the ability to sense the track voltage and automatically select the mode of operation. The sound effects on these models are very good in sound quality (especially the prime mover) as well as sound coordination. Sound coordination is the effect that will get the sounds to func-

The first release of the new Athearn F45 and FP45 models represents three quarters of the different prototype versions delivered to the railroads. The only prototype version missing is the Great Northern/Burlington Northern F45. A view from the front illustrates the different configurations between the sample locomotives with the major difference being the headlight configuration and cab roof air horns. Each locomotive was equipped with a front sheet metal front pilot.

tion in the correct sequence. The DCC operation of changing locomotive direction presents a good example: When direction change is selected, the sound of the prime mover will throttle down first, change headlight direction, and then throttle the prime mover back up. Dynamic brake sound activation is also an excellent effect: When the dynamic brake sound is activated; the sound decoder will first throttle down the prime mover sound effect before activating the dynamic brake sound.

A new headlight lighting effect has been added to these units that give them a prototypically accurate illumination sequence when the headlights are turned on or off. This feature has the ability to vary the voltage provided to the headlight bulbs. When the headlights are turned on by the controller, the light bulbs will gradually go from off, to dim, to bright, just like the prototype. When the headlights are turned off the opposite effect occurs.

When operated in DCC, all normal DCC functions will work except the CV (Configuration Variables) values cannot be read back as the Athearn dual function sound decoder board does not support it. This dual functional sound decoder, which is the brains of this locomotive, is configured to give sound control priority over drive control. This effect keeps the model sound and movement in sync to give it a good prototypical look while in operation. The speed performance tests in DCC yielded good results with the settings left in the default setup. As with anything else in DCC; the Start Voltage (CV2) and Top Voltage (CV5) can be adjusted to improve low speed performance and limit the maximum speed.

When a DCC/Sound unit is run in DC Analog, the model still retains the ability to perform many of the DCC options with the help of the wireless remote transmitter included with the locomotive. This transmitter allows access to control functions such as the bell, horn, air release, dynamic brakes, and light. The range of speed control on the throttle is limited as it takes nearly 9 volts to get the locomotive moving, which leaves only three to four volts of speed range left on the throttle. The coordination of sound with movement is not as sharp in this operation as it is when run in DCC.

Conclusion

Athearn's production announcement two years ago for these models generated much excitement in anticipation to their release. Upon arrival they did not disappoint. In fact they exceeded the expectation of this reviewer; they are well done, absolutely beautiful renditions of these western classics. Athearn deserves credit for adding in some new lighting and sound affects that are a bonus to its good looks, and the addition of Tsunami Sound will be another plus. These examples of the classic EMD F45 and FP45 are both worthy to be classified by Athearn as a "premium train."

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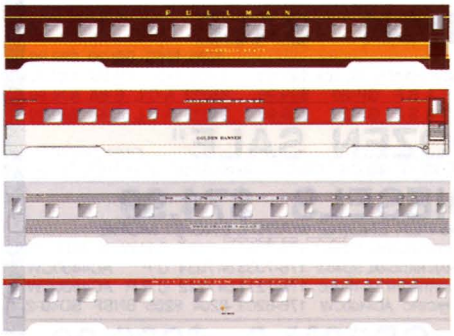
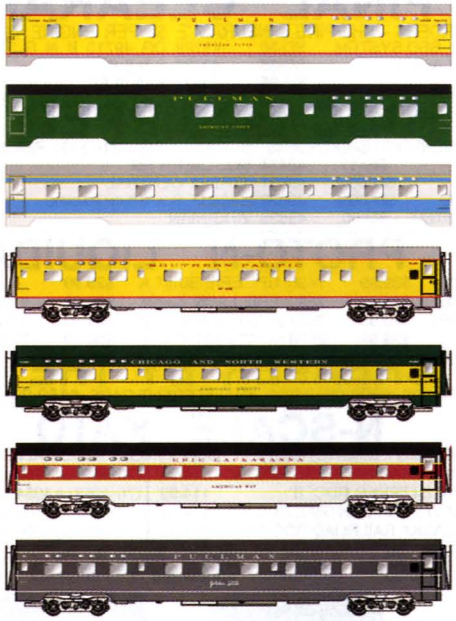
Centralia car shops 6-6-4 Sleepers re-tooled

N — Intermountain has released two 4750 cubic foot hoppers and eleven re-tooled Centralia car shops 6-6-4 Sleepers.

Two 4750 cubic foot hoppers are now available. Farmers Coop Co. (#65378) is painted green with white lettering for NAHX and the Farmers Coop Co. The underside of the car is black. It is available for roadnumbers 56461, 56462, 56464, 56469, 56470, and 56473. First Miss Inc. (#65390) is painted beige and blue. It is numbered for 476002, 476016, 476027, 476038, 476043, and 476049. The hoppers come equipped with etched metal roofwalks, and are equipped with Micro-Trains trucks and couplers. They retail for $21.95.

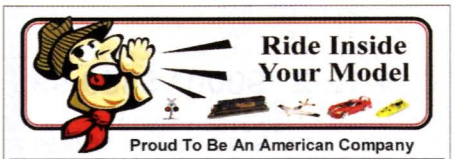


Eleven Centralia car shops 6-6-4 Sleepers have been completely re-tooled. The new car is manufactured with interior details and lighting. Illinois Central (#CCS6553) is painted dark brown and orange with yellow striping and lettering. It is available for roadnames *Magnolia State*, *Banana Road*, *Pelican State*, and *Land O' Strawberries*. Rock Island (#CCS6554) has the red and silver paint scheme for the joint Golden State service. The lettering is black. It is available for roadnames *Golden Banner*, *Golden Dome*, *Golden Locket*, and *Golden Terrace*. ATSF (#CCS6555) is decorated black on silver paint. It is available for roadnames *Sweetwater Valley*, *Eagle Nest Valley*, *Surprise Valley*, and *Whitewater Valley*. Southern Pacific (#CCS6556) is painted silver with red letter-board for the SP Sunset scheme. The lettering is Lettering Gray. It is available for roadnumbers SP9156, SP9162, SP9163, and SP9164.



Union Pacific (#CCS6557) is decorated in the classic Armor Yellow and Harbor Mist Gray. The striping and lettering is red. It is available for roadnames *American Flyer*, *American Park*, *American Progress*, and *American Haven*. Erie (#CCS6558) is painted as delivered in dark green with dulux lettering. The roof and underframe are black. The car is available for roadnames *American Unity*, *American Liberty*, *American Life*, and *American Way*. Missouri Pacific (#CCS6559) is decorated in gray and dark blue with yellow and sliver striping. The lettering is silver. It is available for roadnames *Colorado River* and *Gunnison River*. Southern Pacific (#CCS6560) is painted yellow and gray for joint *City of San Francisco* service, The lettering and striping are red. It is available for roadnumbers SP9150, SP9154, SP9155, SP9165. Chicago & North Western (#CCS6561) is painted dark green and yellow, with black striping. It is available for roadnames *American Beauty*, *American Brigade*, *American Buffalo*, and *American Indian*. Erie Lackawanna (#CCS6562) is painted maroon and gray with yellow striping, and a black roof. The lettering is maroon. It is available for roadnames *American Way*, and *American Life*. Southern Pacific (#CCS6563) is decorated in the Pullman two-tone gray livery with Golden State marking. The lettering is Lettering Gray. It is available for roadnumbers 508, 509, 511, and 512. The cars have been completely re-tooled with new interiors and lighting. They come equipped with Micro-Trains trucks and couplers. The sleeper cars retail for $39.95 each.

Intermountain Railway Co., P.O. Box 839, Longmont, CO 80502-0839; 303-772-1901; Fax: 303-772-8534; E-mail: intermountain@intermountain-railway.com; www.intermountain-railway.com



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Accurail Expands its Fleet in HO

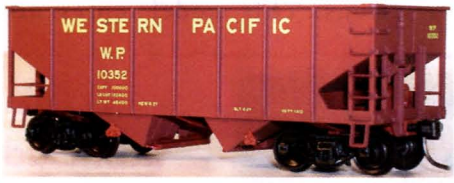
HO — Accurail has added several new cars to its line of AAR steel gondolas, ACF covered hoppers, and various other freight cars. Many are offered in multiple roadnumbers, allowing modelers to build up their fleets without the need to renumber the cars. The models are available now.

Accurail is offering a limited edition three-car set of a Pressureaide ACF covered hoppers lettered for ACFX. The white cars feature the two-tone blue swish logo with black lettering. The set (#3394) retails for $39.98.

A 70 ton triple hopper has been released for Central of Georgia painted oxide with white graphics as a single car (#7534) or in a three-car set (#75344), and for Monon painted oxide with white graphics as a single car (#7535) or in a three-car set (#75354). The cars are $12.98 per car or $37.98 per three pack.

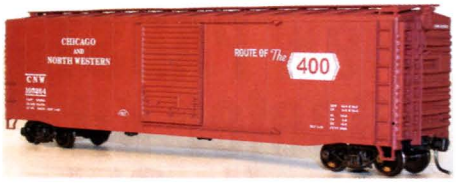
New 41-foot AAR Steel Gondolas are being offered for Seaboard Airline painted mineral red with white graphics as a single car (#3717) and in a three-number set (#37174), SP&S painted

oxide with white graphics as a single car (#3718) or a three-car set (#37184), DM&IR painted black with white graphics in a single number (#3719) or three-number set (#37194), Southern Pacific painted mineral red with white and black graphics as a single car only (#37081-not shown), and Pennsylvania painted mineral red with white graphics as a single car (#37071) or three car set (#37074). Single cars retail for $12.98 and three-car sets are $37.98.



A Western Pacific 55-Ton USRA twin-bay hopper is now available painted oxide with yellow graphics. The car is available in a single number (#2558) for $12.98 or in a three-number set (#25584) for $37.98.

A 50-foot riveted sliding door boxcar is available as a single car for Chicago and Northwestern "Route of the 400." The boxcar (#5026) is painted oxide



with white graphics, and retails for $12.98.

A 40-foot combo door boxcar painted green with white and black graphics is being offered for Burlington Northern. The single car (#3806) retails for $12.98.

A 40-foot double sheath wood boxcar is available for Ontario & Western (O&W) painted oxide with white graphics. The car (#4634) retails for $12.98.

A 50-foot insulated plug door boxcar has been released for BNSF/Western Fruit Express. The Mineral Red car features white lettering and the yellow "SAFETY is no Accident" slogan on the door. The boxcar (#5815) retails for $12.98.

Accurail, P.O. Box 278, Elburn, IL 60119-0278; 630-365-6400; Fax: 630-365-6499; E-mail: accurail@accurail.com; www.accurail.com

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New PABST Reefer Kit from Ye Olde Huff N Puff

O — Ye Olde Huff N Puff has released a new 40- foot reefer for PABST. It has a ribbed overhanging roof, a solid center underbody, and is made with all wood and cast metal parts. The wood sides are silk-screened. The kit includes complete instructions, and retails for $30.00 plus shipping.

Ye Olde Huff N Puff, P.O. Box 1103, Lewistown, PA 17044; 717-248-8935; E-mail: info@yeoldehuffnpuff.com; www.yeoldehuffnpuff.com

BTS's new Evans Gondola and McCabe Speeder

S-scale kits ideal for modern and logging lines

S — BTS has released two new kits, a 1970s-era Evans gondola, and a McCabe Lumber Co. Speeder.

The unpainted 52-foot 6-inch 100 ton Evans gondola kit consists of urethane castings for the one-piece body and frame, hidden weight, and brass and white metal brake components. Assembled with ACC or epoxy. It comes less decals, trucks, and couplers. The gondola (#09201) retails for $69.95.

The gondola kit is based on a prototype built by the Southern Iron and Equipment Co beginning in 1975. Evans took over SIECO and continued building the cars through December 1981. A total of 1,730 cars were built with three minor body variations. This model represents the second version, and the most common.

The McCabe Lumber Co. Speeder kit consists of laser-cut basswood, plywood, cardstock, and brass and white metal detail castings. Decals and driver are included. It features a sheet brass frame, lost-wax end beams and steps, and NWSL wheelsets. The freelanced McCabe Lumber Co. Speeder was inspired by a prototype on the Oregon American Lumber Company. The kit (#08280) retails for $199.95.

BTS, RR 1 Box 141A, Belington, WV 26250; 304-823-3729; Fax: 304-823-2901; E-mail: bill@btsrr.com; www.btsrr.com

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Baltimore O Scale Society unveils 2009 convention cars

Troop Train cars available in 2-Rail and 3-Rail versions

O — The Baltimore O Scale Society and the Baltimore Society of Model Engineers is now shipping its 2009 O Scale National Convention Cars.

The "Troop Trains" express cars are available in three different numbers in 2-rail or 3-rail with identical detailed bodies, underframes, and trucks; the only differences are the wheels and couplers.

The models are built from prototype blueprints, operate on O-42 curves, weigh in at over 1.5 pounds, include rubber diaphragms, are equipped with high-speed Allied full cushion diecast trucks, floor with underframe details, and dual brake system. The cars measure 13 inches long by 3 inches high by 2 inches wide.

The Baltimore & Ohio express car paint scheme is blue with gold lettering; the other available car is the green Railway Express Agency Red Diamond car. Built by Weaver Models and offered for the first time in these variations, the "Troop Train" cars are available exclusively through the Baltimore O Scale Society, LLC, co-sponsor of the 2009 O Scale National Convention June 18-20. The models are available for $65.00 plus $8.00 shipping for the first car and $4.00 shipping for each additional car. The order form is available online at www.oscaleeast.com/OrderingForm.pdf

These Express Cars ran Coast to Coast. Following WWII, railroads were offered surplus troop cars at bargain prices. The cars were essentially 50-foot boxcars on high-speed passenger trucks making them ideal for conversion to express boxcars. Railroads converted the cars for express freight service and operated them at the head end of their passenger trains.

Baltimore O Scale Society, LLC, P.O. Box 14, Baldwin, MD 21012; E-mail: info@oscaleeast.com; www.oscaleeast.com

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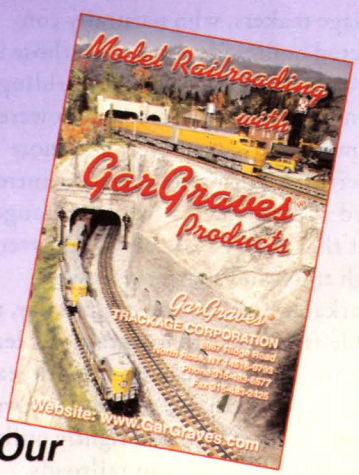

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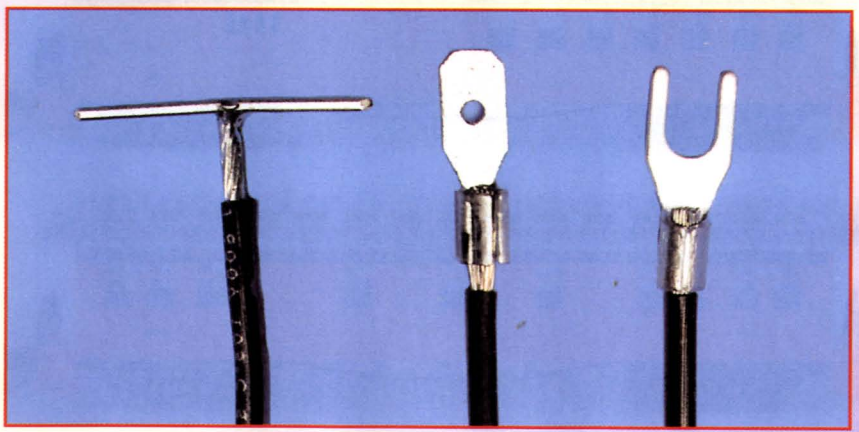

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REVIEW N

Athearn Brings Back Old-Time Railroading

Resurrected Overland passenger cars add distinctive flair to HO

Review and Photos by Art Lake
Review and Photos by Phil Scandura

Athearn Four-Car Overland Passenger set (#11866), MSRP: $59.98
Athearn Overland Passenger Coach (#11846), MSRP: $16.98

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www.athearn.com

These Athearn Overland passenger car sets and individual coaches are beautiful with very good painting and accurate lettering. Samples for this review were the Denver & Rio Grande Western Passenger Car set, item 11866, and an individual D&RGW coach, item 11846 shown above.

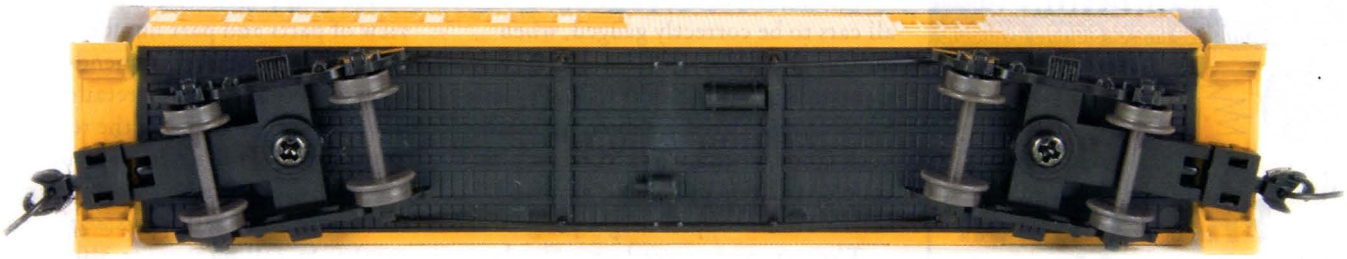
AMERICANS once spent considerable portions of their lives in railroad cars. From approximately 1860 to 1930, railroads were the most common means of inland transportation and, at their peak just before the First World War, 98 percent of all intercity travel was by rail. No other means of transportation, not even the automobile, has achieved such a monopoly. Each day millions of passengers mounted the end platform steps of steam-era cars, some to travel a few miles to a suburban home, others to live within the swaying body of a cinder-laden Pullman for a week as it crossed the continent.

The first American passenger cars were simple four-wheel carriages that could be divided into three basic types: the traditional curve-sided stagecoach, the compartment style with three tandem bodies built as a unit, and the minor subclass of so-called Gothic cars. In another words, an old stagecoach was mounted on flanged wheels for railroad service. The cars — built by established carriage makers, who naturally constructed bodies identical with those used for road coaches —were rough riding and not very safe when steam-powered locomotives became faster and more powerful. Eight-wheel cars were introduced and provided a flexible arrangement that enabled the car to transverse rough track and sharp curves with remarkable ease. To the present day, this double-truck car has maintained a leading position because of its smooth, easy ride. It was, of course, particularly well suited to the uneven and lightly built tracks of early American railroads.

Athearn is offering the Overland passenger car sets and individual coaches in several different roadnames. Shown here is the D&RGW set, item 11866, which includes a combine, R-P-O, coach, and a business car. These sets and individual coaches are available at your local hobby dealers.

The Overland Passenger Car

With the completion of America's first transcontinental railroad (the "Overland Route"), larger passenger cars were required to accommodate westbound and eastbound traffic. In the 1870s, Overland Cars, a new generation of coaches, premiered. Constructed of wood with distinctive clerestory roofs above and sturdy iron truss rods below, the Overlands were a common sight on long- and medium-distance trains



Athearn added McHenry knuckle-spring couplers with magnetic uncoupling, wheel flanges compatible with code 55 track, and screw mounted trucks. The underside detail of the brake system is lacking, otherwise the detail is good. Notice the different types of plastic used for the wheelsets and the trucks.

through the 1880s. The basic design was used for a wide variety of passenger car configurations, but not dinners. In the early era of rail travel, trains made meal stops for passengers rather than feeding them on board.

As even larger passenger equipment joined America's railroads, Overlands served on branch lines of major railroads. Once bumped from even these humble duties, Overlands could still be found in work train service well into the 1920s. The Overland Cars were built for both standard and narrow gauge railroads.

Roundhouse/MDC vs. Athearn Overland Passenger Cars

A number of years ago, Roundhouse/MDC developed and sold these passenger cars. They were an improvement over their Pullman passenger car kits sold in the 1970s. In 2004, Athearn purchased the tooling and the rights to manufacture and sell these passenger cars. Both of these cars have very good detail with screw-mounted trucks with couplers, accurate detail of the bottom side trusses, Clerestory "bull nose" roofs, and the window glazing appears to be the same. Athearn went the extra mile by packaging their cars in hard plastic jewel boxes, the paint and lettering is sharper; also added are McHenry knuckle-spring couplers with magnetic uncoupling and wheel flanges compatible with code 55 track. From the photos and information I found, the Athearn cars seem to be accurate with both lettering and painting. I should note that the model appears to be based on a narrow gauge passenger car because those cars were shorter in length than the standard gauge cars built in the same era.

Testing the Athearn Overland Passenger Car set and Coach

The samples received for this review of the Athearn Overland D&RGW Passenger Car set — which included a combine, coach, sleeper, and business car, and an individual D&RGW coach, with a different roadnumber — are beautiful. The detail, paint, and lettering are sharp and crisp. The trucks appear to be correct, based on photos of the passenger cars built during this era. The underside is lacking details like brake rods, levers, and air lines, but otherwise the appearance of the flooring is good. The brake wheel appears to be a lever and not a wheel. Remember that this tooling is several years old. It would have been difficult to recreate this type of fine detail with the manufacturing processes of that time. These cars also had a wood-burning stove to allow passengers to stay warm in the winter, but smokestacks were omitted on all of these cars.

Information about the number of Overland passenger cars built is hard to determine. However, these cars appear to be patterned after the Pullman Palace car. Using this popular design, different passenger car builders and major railroads either modified or built these cars to meet their needs and standards, giving the cars a similar appearance.

Per NMRA Recommended Practice "RP-20.1 Car Weight," N-scale rolling stock should be weighted at [1/2 oz + 0.15 oz per inch of body length], resulting in a calculated weight of 1.15 oz per passenger car at measured length of 4.25 inches; the actual measured

This coach slipped through Athearn's Quality Control procedure. Notice the lettering on this coach. There are some issues with the application of lettering paint on the sample used for this review. All of the other coaches reviewed were crisp and accurate. However, this could not be seen under normal conditions, assuming the normal viewing distance of three feet. The spongy lettering didn't diminish my enjoyment of running the car in the least.

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Testing found the wheel sets on all cars to be correctly gauged, when measured with the NMRA Mark IV standards gauge. Thanks to low-profile wheels, these cars are able to negotiate both Code 80 and Code 55 track. The coupler and trip pin height matched the Micro-Trains coupler height gauge.

The cars were tested on a flat layout with 9-3/4 inch curves and again on my club's layout, which features broad curves, a three-percent grade over four feet, and numerous Peco standard switches. Initially, the cars' performance was flawless; however, after about three hours of testing the cars didn't seem to be as freewheeling as they were when the testing procedure started. After searching on internet forums, I discovered a couple of other modelers had similar issues. These problems are minor and could possibly be corrected by swapping out the plastic wheels with graphite or metal wheel sets. I contacted Athearn and learned they were not aware of this problem and was assured they would look into this issue.

Other than a brief history on the back of the plastic jewel box, Athearn doesn't include any paperwork with an exploded view of parts and part numbers as they once did. Athearn recommends that you try your local hobby retailer first to locate your part items. If the retailer is not able to get them, then you may order directly from Athearn by contacting them with an e-mail (parts@athearn.com) or by calling them at 310-763-7140, ext. 107, Monday-Friday 8:00 AM-4:30 PM Pacific Time. You will be able to talk to a representative who will assist you with your needs.

Closing Thoughts

Athearn is committed to providing quality products for the model railroader. They were very polite and helpful when I contacted them on the phone. E-mail correspondence was prompt and also very helpful.

These samples of the Overland Passenger Cars are very beautiful; granddaughters would call them "cute." They will look great on any layout whether you are modeling the early steam-powered era or creating an excursion train. If you enjoy "Old-Time Railroading," I recommend them as a must-buy.

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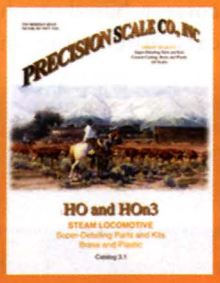

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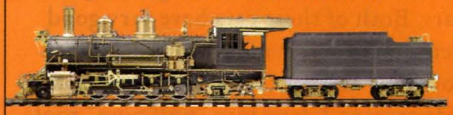

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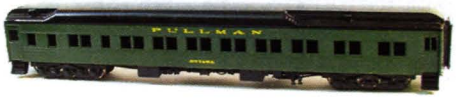
- D&RGW 2-8-2 K-37
- D&RGW 2-8-0 C-19
- D&RG Class 4-4-0

Visit our website at www.precisionscaleco.com for complete listings.

New Pullman Kits from Bethlehem Car Works

HO — Bethlehem Car Works has released new kits for the Pullman Plan 4019B Parlor-Restaurant-Lounge cars, and the Pullman Plan 2410; the kits retail for $67.50 less trucks and couplers. They include a decal sheet for the various Pullman names.



The Pullman Plan 4019B Parlor-Restaurant-Lounge car kits are made of brass car sides on a Branchline core kit with plastic and metal detail parts. Pullman manufactured four Parlor-Restaurant-Lounge cars; two were sold to Boston & Maine, and one each to the Pennsylvania and Erie. The Boston and Maine cars (#512) were named *Onward* and *Progress*. The PRR car (#410) was named *Courageous*, and the Erie was the *Valiant*.

Three different variations of the Pullman Plan 2410 cars are being offered by Bethlehem Car Works. These kits have brass car sides and a Branchline core with plastic and metal detail parts. The first variation (#2410) is available with Electro Mechanical Air Conditioning for the following names: *Ottawa* for the Reading Company, *Raymilton* for the DL&W, and *Saoma* for the B&M.

The second kit (#2410A) has Ice Activated Air Conditioning and is available for the following roadnames: *Emsworth*, *Frankfort*, and *Rowland* for PRR; *Imola* for DL&W; *Lamorna* for the NYC; *Peralta* for B&M; *Shardlow* for Wabash; *Milton* and *Monteagle* for B&M; and *Oakner* and *Wesley* for Leheigh Valley.

Bethlehem's third release (#1410) has Ice Activated Air Conditioning, is named *Cuttyhulk*, and is lettered for the Norfolk & Western.

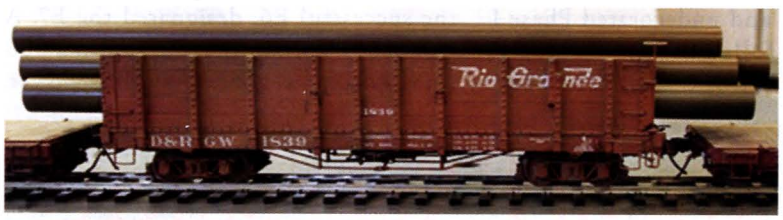
In 1948, the Federal Government ordered Pullman to sell off its cars. The company sold many of their cars to the railroads where the cars were used. A number of these cars were Pullman Plan 2410. Most of these cars were purchased by the railroads and leased back to Pullman.

The Bethlehem Car Works Inc., 3 Carousel Dr., Telford, PA 18969; 215 721-3006; Fax: 215 723-2542

New D&RGW Pipe Gondola from San Juan Car Co.

On3 & On30 — San Juan Car Co. has released a new group of Ready-To-Run cars: the D&RGW pipe gondola with idler flat car. The models include a pipe load, all injection molded parts, wire grabs, metal wheels, and magnetic knuckle couplers. The sets retails for $149.95 each. The idler flats are also available separately for $64.95, painted with no lettering. The high side gondola is available by itself for $74.95 painted with no lettering. Additional pipe loads are $19.95.

The pipe gondola is available in the following roadnumbers for On3 and On30 respectively: Pipe Gondola #1504 with Idler Flat #6713 and large pipe loads (1040-3-1504 or 1040-30-1504); pipe gondola #1095 with idler flat #1107 and medium pipe load (#1040-3-1095 or 1040-30-1095); pipe gondola #9338 with idler flat #6770 and small pipe load (#1040-3-9338 or 1040-30-9338); pipe gondola #9278 with idler flat #6706 and large pipe load (#1040-3-9278 or #1040-30-9278); pipe gondola #1026 with flat #6715 medium load (#1040-3-1726 or 1040-30-1726), pipe gondola #1770 with idler flat



#9515 and small pipe load (#1040-3-1770 or #1040-30-1770); pipe gondola #1186 with idler flat #6702 and large pipe load; (#1040-3-1186 or 1040-30-1186); pipe gondola #1659 with idler flat #6704 and medium pipe load (#1040-3-1659 or 1040-30-1659), and painted no lettering with a small pipe load (#1040-3 or #1040-30).

San Juan Car Co., P.O. Box 1028, Durango, CO 81302; 970-385-5256; Fax: 970-385-1030; E-mail: sanjuancar@frontier.net; www.sanjuancarco.com

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Latest PROTO 2000 Phase I E7s feature numerous upgrades

HO — Walthers has released the latest run of the PROTO 2000 E7 passenger diesels with new roadnames and more detail. The locomotive has been retooled to match the Phase I body, the models are offered in standard DC, or DCC, and Sound versions, complete with a variety of railroad-specific details. In addition, each includes: see-through air intake grilles; helical gears authentic bulldog nose; painted metal grab irons; handrails and lift rings; five-pole, skew-wound, high-torque, high-efficiency can motor; and proto-max metal knuckle couplers. The models are being offered as A-A sets, A-B sets, single A-units, and single B-units. Each model features a unique roadnumber, allowing modelers to purchase multiple units without repeating numbers.

The EMD E7 diesels are available for Baltimore and Ohio, Chicago North Western, Great Northern, Seaboard Air Line, New York Central, Southern Pacific, Union Pacific, and undecorated Phase I as-built. The following are the retail prices for each set: A-A sets with Sound and DCC are $479.98, standard DC sets are $329.98; A-B sets with Sound and DCC are $479.98, standard DC sets are $329.98, single A-units with Sound and DCC are $249.98, standard DC units are $169.98; single B-units with Sound and DCC are $249.98, and standard DC units are $169.98.

Walthers' upgraded Proto 2000 E7A and cabless B-unit is being offering in standard DC and DCC/Sound equipped in a variety of configurations.

When EMD was given the green light to build new passenger diesels in early 1945, it unveiled an improved version of the successful E6, designated the E7. A pair of 567A prime movers, rated at 2,000 total horsepower, now supplied power. Most of the notable changes were seen on the body and included a new and much smaller bulldog nose, as well as a large, vertical louver or screen panels directly behind the cab doors.

Introduced just as American railroads began upgrading and rebuilding passenger service, the E7 was the most successful passenger diesel ever built, with 428 A-units and 82 cabless B-units produced through April of 1949 when the E8 was introduced.

Walthers, P.O. Box 3039, Milwaukee, WI 53201-3039; 800-487-2467; Fax: 800-807-2647; www.walthers.com

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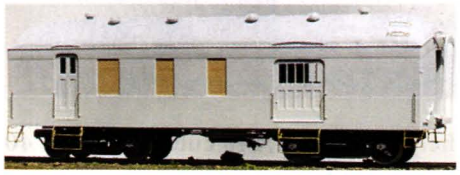
New Harriman Head End Car Kit from Southern Car & Foundry



O — Southern Car & Foundry has released a 40-foot Baggage/Postal Harriman head end car kit. The kit includes a one-piece cast resin body, one-piece cast underframe, laser-cut acrylic windows, complete brake detail, and cast brass steps. The kit retails for $125.00.

Southern Car & Foundry, 970 Sunshine Lane Ste. D, Altamonte Springs, FL 32714; 407-389-3100; Fax: 407-389-3101; E-mal: jscagle@msn.com; www.southerncarandfoundry.com

New Pennsylvania Boxcars from Amarillo

HO — The Amarillo Railroad Museum has announced an exclusive run of Red Caboose ready-to-run Pennsylvania Railroad X29 boxcars with patch plates in the Merchandise service scheme. These boxcars are detailed with lettering and artwork provided by Pennsylvania Railroad expert Harry Werner. There are twelve numbers available. The numbers are: 504001, 504014, 504037, 504087, 504091, 504126, 504133, 504142, 504155, 504179, and 504185. The cars sell for $31.95 each.

"Merchandise Service" was the Pennsylvania Railroad's less-than-carload (LCL) service, inaugurated in the 1940s to compete with the fast-growing postwar trucking industry. Four PRR car classes were used for this purpose, each specially-lettered to advertise this service. The initial lettering arrangement featured a full-length silver/aluminum band with white and red accents. Soon thereafter, this colorful scheme was simplified to all-white by replacing the silver areas with white and the red areas with standard freight car color. The X29 was the only class of the four never to carry the silver-band scheme.

During the mid-1950s, the Pennsylvania Railroad adopted a "billboard" lettering scheme for its rolling stock featuring a more prominent roadname and a large keystone logo accented by a black shadow. At this time, the "Merchandise Service" lettering arrangement was revised to incorporate these features. This is the lettering arrangement on the Amarillo Railroad Museum release.

The paint scheme offered was adopted during the period of declining LCL service by all railroads. LCL service was unable to effectively compete with trucking by the mid '50s, and many cars were withdrawn from LCL service and transferred to general revenue service without being repainted.

Amarillo Railroad Museum, P. O. Box 31106, Amarillo, TX 79120; 806-376-6548; E-mail: amarillomuseum@aol.com; www.amarillorailmuseum.com

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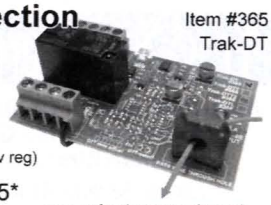

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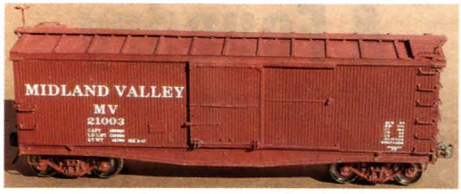
New Early 20th Century Boxcar Kits from Sunshine

HO — Sunshine Models has released thirty-six-foot boxcars for the Ann Arbor, Louisville & Nashville, Delaware and Hudson, Midland Valley, Denver & Rio Grande (not shown), and Missouri Pacific (not shown). The Sunshine kits are vacuum cast in gray urethane. Kits include all detailing parts (except trucks and couplers) and proprietary decals. Full instructions and a Prototype Data Sheet are included. The kits sell for $38.00 each. ARA plastic trucks with metal wheel sets are available for $5.00. Assorted chalkmarks and reweigh decals are available separately.

Boxcars with a thirty-six foot interior length and steel underframe were common to all railroads prior to the Twentieth Century, and were still being constructed in the Twenties. While a bit of an anomaly, they were part of the scene until the middle 1950s, especially in the South and Northeast.

Since 36-foot boxcars were designed for individual roads during an era long before standardization, there was wide variation in appearance. Ends varied from tongue in groove siding with an outward facing channel end sill to indented Murphy steel and a recessed composite design. Large outward facing channels or concealed reversed channels were employed for side sills. At the same time some elements were common. Typically, the cars had tongue in groove siding, substantial fishbelly underframes, and metal sheathed roofs. The boxcars shared similar dimensions: usually 8 feet in height, about 2,448 cubic feet, and 40 ton capacities.



The L&N, D&H, and MoP were not only large owners of the boxcars, they rebuilt their cars in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s to extend their life into the early diesel era. The Sunshine kits are modeled to represent the cars as they appeared in life. A full history of the cars is available upon request from Sunshine Models.

Sunshine Models, P.O. Box 4997, Springfield, MO 65808-4997; 417-831-0750

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Concept Model's General Electric Schnabel Car Hauls Heavy Loads in HO

Concept Models has released its newest Schnabel car kit. The car is available as three separate pieces, giving the modeler the ability to build as desired.

HO — Concept Models has announced their newest release, the General Electric GEX 40013-40014 Schnabel car. It is modeled after a twelve-axle Schnabel car that may be used with the load or ran empty with the two halves of the car joined together as in-transit mode.

The car is made up of three kits: the basic car, the load, and a black truck frame kit. This allows the modeler versatility in modeling the car configured as desired. The basic car is priced at $49.99. The transformer load is $19.99. The optional black truck frame kit is available for $9.99.

Concept Models, 44609 W. Canyon Creek Dr., Maricopa, AZ 85239-5019; E-mail: concept_models@con-sys.com; www.con-sys.com

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Making the Switch to O Scale

An introductory look at what 21st Century O-scale two-rail model railroading may have in store for you

The Santa Fe Warbonnet F-units are perhaps the most recognized locomotives in history, having been at the forefront of the transition from steam to the diesel-electric. Likewise, these colorful Atlas O covered wagons are leading 2-rail O-scalers into a new era of ready-to-run DCC/sound-equipped motive power.

REVIEW O

Review and Photos by David Otte

C&NW 0-6-0 (#3706-2), MSRP: $649.00
SLRG Dash 8-40B (#5857-2), MSRP: $489.95
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ARE you an HO- or N-scale model railroader whose aging eyesight calls out for trains that are a bit larger, but you want to stick with a familiar track system, prototypical level of detail, and the National Model Railroad Association-based Digital Command Control to which you have become accustomed? Perhaps you're an O gauger who likes operating scale-size equipment on your hi-rail layout, but is starting to question that third rail, the oversize flanges, swinging pilots, and the toy-like couplers. Maybe you are even a garden railroader looking for something that has the robust qualities of Large Scale trains, but wish to move a scaled down version of your hobby indoors during those colder months of the year. No matter what your situation might be, if you're looking for change it's time for you to consider the increasing viability of two-rail O-scale model railroading.

O-scale two-rail has been around for over a half-century and has been supported by a number of fine cottage industries and larger manufacturers alike, but never really measured up to the ready-to-run standards that other scales have enjoyed over the past decade. However, the 1990s resurgence of three-rail O-gauge trains and, more importantly, the trend for scale-sized tinplate equipment, made it financially feasible for companies such as Weaver, Atlas O, and MTH Electric Trains to start offering two-rail versions of their models, thereby greatly expanding the 1:48 scale two-rail market. The end result today is the availability of ready-to-run, factory decorated, DCC- and sound-equipped locomotives that are comparable in detail and operating qualities to their HO scale counterparts.

On the other hand, motive power, along with rolling stock, is just a small part of the modern O-scale equation. In order for O scale to become completely feasible for any modeler regardless of experience, a complete track system and

command control equipment capable of handling the power requirements of the larger scale is a must. As you will soon realize, these two important ingredients in today's O-scale recipe are now a reality as well. So join me now as we take an introductory look at what 21st Century O-scale two-rail model railroading may have in store for you.

A 21st Century O-scale Track System

Atlas O is to be credited for much of the ready-to-run equipment the novice O scaler can find on the market today. The most notable contribution of which is their 21st Century Track System. To me, the success of any scale in model railroading really depends on the track — the bread and butter of a layout. Key to the track system is its sectional design allowing the beginner to assemble a layout quickly and without the need for custom-cut pieces. This has been proven in the HO- and N-scale markets and makes sense that for O-scale two-rail to grow, it also needs this ease of use to cater to all types of modelers. This was an obvious conclusion for Atlas, who has been in the HO- and N-scale track manufacturing business for decades.

Generally, Atlas O's 21st Century track features code 148 solid nickel silver rail and a prototypical profile; dark plastic brown ties, properly spaced per US railroad practices, that are UV compatible for outdoor use and exhibit a wood grain finish with correct spike and tie plate detail and nickel silver rail joiners. Each track section also uses a snap-lock feature that allows the track sections to be assembled securely and temporarily, if desired, before installing them permanently on a layout, for which pre-drilled holes in some of the ties are provided. Current cataloged offerings include straight track sections measuring 1.75 inches to 10 inches in length, 36-inch, 40.5-inch, 45-inch, 49.5-inch, and 54-inch radius curve sections, and both 45 degree and 90 degree crossings. In addition, the modeler can create an unlimited degree of curves with Atlas O's 40-inch-long Flex-Track pieces.

Making this track system complete, however, are Atlas O's Custom Supreme turnouts. Crafted in a manner similar to the sectional track, the number 5 and number 7.5 turnouts, in both right and left hand orientations, and a wye turnout feature detailed metal insulated frogs and points that are DCC-compatible with the option of powering the frogs if desired. One-third sections of 40.5-inch radius and half sections of 36-inch radius curves plus short straight sections are offered separately that allow the modeler to assemble parallel track sidings and combined turnout and crossing arrangements. Switch machines and controllers are also available separately for remote activation of the turnouts.

Fully supporting the budding O scaler, five different layout packages are also offered by Atlas O to help get the novice modeler up and running as soon as possible. These range from a simple twin oval with single siding design to a more complex multi-train pike featuring multiple sidings, yards, and even a turntable. For an even more interesting layout, throw in a couple of Atlas O's bridge kits based on single- or double-track Pratt Truss, Deck Girder, or Through Plate Girder prototypes, or use their operating turntable for your locomotive servicing facility. For a complete two-rail product listing of the 21st Century Track System, I recommend obtaining a copy of the Atlas All-Scale Track & Accessory Catalog either by

More modern motive power comes to O-scale 2-rail in the form of this Atlas O Dash 8. This particular replica is representative of a group of 100 B39-8s built by GE for LMX Leasing in March 1988 and subsequently leased to the Burlington Northern. In April of 2007, number 8577 was sold to the San Luis & Rio Grande where it continues to serve today hauling local freights over the old Denver & Rio Grande Western's La Veta Pass Route between Walsenburg and Alamosa, Colorado. The O-scale Dash 8 features an injection-molded carbody, separately applied metal handrail and grabs, and diecast metal trucks, fuel tank, and pilots. She's powered by two flywheel-equipped can motors and features authentic GE prime mover sounds and multi-chime air horn.

phoning the company or via download from their web site. Free layout design software is also available to customers for download at www.atlaso.com.

Taking Command of O Scale

Equally as important as an all-encompassing track system to the success of O scale is a DCC setup capable of handling the power requirements of the larger and often dual-motored locomotives. Whether moving up from HO or over from three-rail O gauge, you're most likely already spoiled by command control operation and will expect the same from O scale. That's where NCE Corporation comes in: they've taken their well-received Procab and Powerhouse DCC system, as used by many HO-scale modelers, and beefed it up for the larger scale.

The PH-10 system includes the Powerhouse command station, Procab handheld controller, a separate 10-Amp Powerhouse booster with full 10-amp output, a model D408SR silent-running decoder ready for installation in your locomotive, and an instruction booklet. The modeler will need to provide their own transformer, which should not exceed 22 volts. For this article we selected NCE's own 18-Volt AC 10-Amp power supply.

Those in the smaller scales or out in the garden already experienced in DCC will be quite comfortable utilizing the NCE equipment with O scale, as it follows standard NMRA protocols and operates pretty much the same as a DCC system would for any other scale. Three-rail O gaugers like me who have spent most of their time with proprietary command systems, such as those produced by Lionel and MTH Electric Trains, or the novice who has yet to discover the benefits of DCC will find the NCE PH-10 setup to be straightforward and easy to understand.

While the spiral-bound, 84-page Power Pro System Reference Manual may look a bit imposing at first glance, the manufacturer has thoughtfully provided a simple equipment setup diagram at the front of the book followed by a three-page quick start guide that will have any modeler up and running a train in less than 20 minutes. A subsequent section on completing the quick start provides a step-by-step procedure for programming a locomotive address too so you can add a second locomotive almost immediately. The balance of the manual is a thorough guidebook to the individual pieces of

There's nothing more eye-catching than an F-unit painted up in the Santa Fe's Warbonnet scheme and Atlas O has captured it to a tee on their O-scale F3 Phase 1 A and B models. The Santa Fe purchased 12 cab units and 12 booster units with steam generators from series 16(L, A, B, C) – 21(L, A, B, C) in October 1946 for passenger service. By 1972, a number of these units would be rebuilt as CF-7s or traded in to EMD on new motive power. This powered cab and unpowered booster duo feature a plastic carbody and diecast metal chassis, trucks, and pilot. True lovers of the covered wagon will especially appreciate QSI's reproduction of the sounds of a 16-cylinder 2-cycle 567B diesel engine growling away.

Atlas O's first steam locomotive offering, the USRA 0-6-0, is the only O-scale 2-rail ready-to-run steam engine on the market today to feature a factory-installed DCC/sound decoder and a fan-driven smoke unit. This hefty little switcher is fabricated with a diecast metal boiler, chassis, tender body, and trucks. All the plumbing, handrail, and appliances are add-on details, some road specific, with the prototype's cab interior replicated, too, including a hand-painted crew. A single flywheel-equipped can motor propels the six-drivered USRA-type and operation is enhanced by the realistic sound that emanates from a speaker housed in the floor of the tender. Our Chicago & North Western number 2618 represents one of 35 0-6-0s (2601 – 2635) allocated by the USRA and built by either Alco's Paterson or Schenectady Works in 1919. Classed M-3 by the railroad, the USRA switchers would remain in service well into the 1950s: a true testament to the USRA design.

NCE equipment, programming features, and tips on installing decoders, creating a programming track, and power wiring, which I found to be informative and easy to read despite my limited knowledge of DCC. The bottom line here is that you don't have to be an electronics engineer to play with the NCE system!

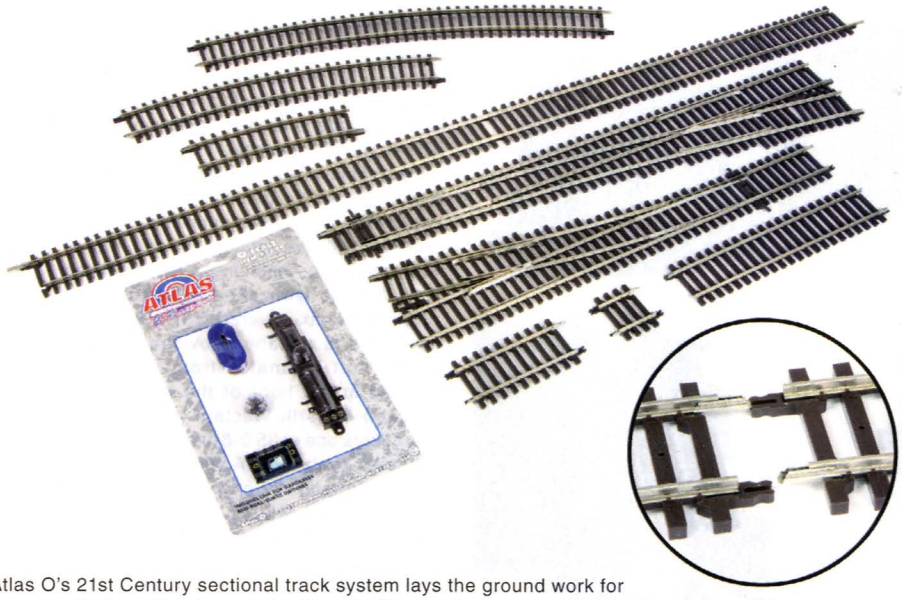
In preparation for discussing the final key ingredient for O scale, the motive power, and with track and DCC system in hand, this once dedicated three-rail O gauger created a simple, temporary test layout utilizing minimum 36-inch radius curves and number 5 turnouts on a 6-1/12-foot-wide by 10-foot-long work table. This is pretty much equivalent to what a typical first-time HO-scale modeler might build on a common four-by-eight-foot sheet of plywood and I wanted to see just how much O scale could be modeled in a relatively small space. I found the snap-lock arrangement on the Atlas O track system to work quite well in this application and had the NCE equipment wired up and ready for testing in very short order.

A Cornucopia of Monumental O-scale Motive Power

While Atlas O certainly doesn't have the corner on O-scale two-rail motive power, it does offer the only DCC- and sound-equipped ready-to-run models in the plastic/diecast metal construction category on the market today. As part of their Master Series lineup, these Gold Edition models are outfitted with sound decoders designed by QSI, an electronics company familiar to many HO modelers due to their products' use in a whole host of today's 1:87 scale locomotives. DCC-ready Silver Edition versions are also available for those modelers who prefer to install their own decoders or for operators of DC analog layouts not interested in the added expense of a sound system.

Fairbanks Morse, General Electric, the American Locomotive Company, and Electro Motive — Atlas O offers a cornucopia of famous locomotives based on a variety of prototypes, roadnames, and eras. Basically, whatever they have produced for the three-rail market since the late 1990s is available in a two-rail format with the addition of fixed pilots, Kadee-compatible knuckle couplers, and scale wheel sets. Take for example the samples before us: a 1919 Alco built USRA 0-6-0 (currently the manufacturer's only steam locomotive offering), a postwar EMD F-3A and B diesel-electric, and a late 1980s GE Dash 8-40B. Atlas O's roster of steam and diesel power in itself has given vast vitality to the two-rail O-scale modeling medium. From my experience, accuracy, detail, and quality are all words synonymous with the Atlas O name and it's sufficient to say here that these particular samples do not deviate from past accolades one iota.

Model Railroading in O-scale 2-rail has never been easier or more enjoyable thanks in part to the efforts of manufactures like Atlas O and NCE Corporation. They're offering hobbyists ready-to-run equipment featuring the latest DCC and sound technology plus the means to build an O-scale empire regardless of a modeler's experience. This is good news for the novice as well as those HO, N, and Large scalers looking to make a relatively effortless transition to a new scale.



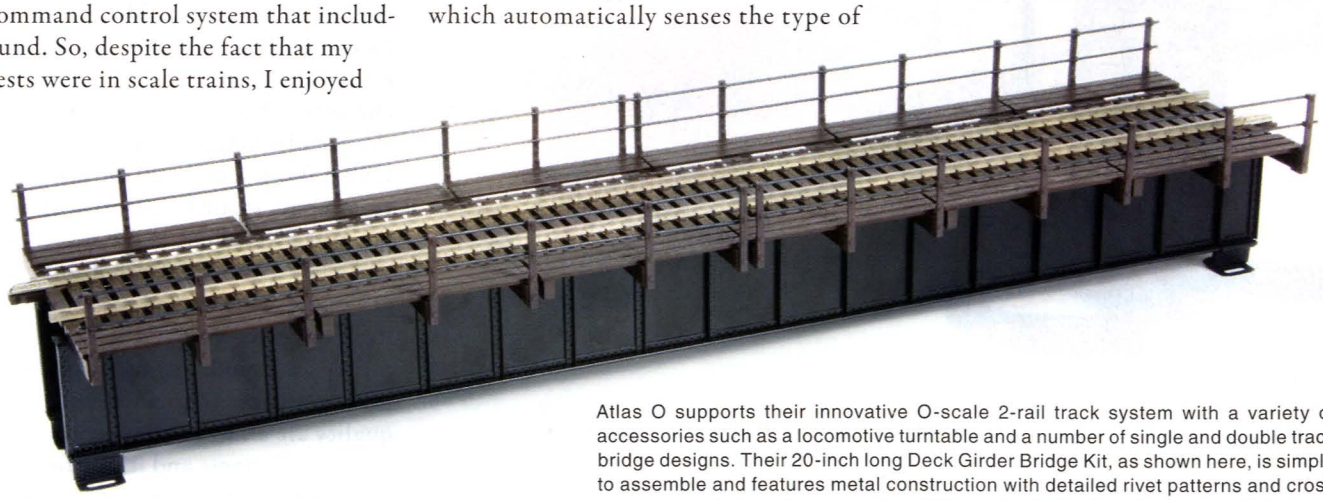
Atlas O's 21st Century sectional track system lays the ground work for a successful transition to modeling O scale. The track pieces are designed just like their HO- and N-scale counterparts are so that no custom cutting is really necessary in achieving a track layout design. A variety of straight track lengths are available along with numerous size curves starting with 36-inch radius sections and number 5, 7.5, and wye turnouts. In addition, you can still come up with some custom radius curves too by using the manufacturer's 40-inch long Flex-Track. Note the snap-lock connection and rail joiners used on this track system as shown in the inset photo as well as the wood grain, spike, and tie plate detail incorporated into the UV compatible plastic ties, make the track suitable even for use outdoors.

For a more comprehensive look at each of their prototypes and specific construction details, I'll refer you to *Model Railroad News*' previous review articles on the 3-rail versions of the Dash 8-40B in the March 2002 issue, the 0-6-0 in the February 2008 issue, and the F-3s in the May 2008 issue.

On the other hand, I will elaborate briefly on just what it is that makes these Gold Edition models so instrumental in today's O-scale two-rail model railroading hobby, and that is the issue of DCC and sound. In my earlier modeling days, I was drawn into O-gauge 3-rail because companies such as Lionel were the first to offer a relatively affordable, easy-to-use command control system that included sound. So, despite the fact that my interests were in scale trains, I enjoyed the freedom of multi-train operation and the dimension that those fantastic digital sound systems offered. DCC was available as an add-on to HO-scale locomotives back then, but more than a decade would pass before 1:87 ready-to-run DCC/sound-equipped models would make their way to the marketplace. More recently, this ready-to-run technology has finally filtered down to O-scale two-rail, making it a much more user-friendly and dynamic scale in which to model.

Providing this fun factor onboard Atlas O's finely crafted motive power is QSI's proven Quantum DCC digital sound technology. It's a smart decoder, which automatically senses the type of layout control — either analog DC or DCC, so one does have the option to run these locomotives with a regular transformer. Under analog conditions, there are plenty of sound features that can be manipulated. However, they do rely almost entirely on the use of the direction switch on your transformer to activate and even program these features. I got the system to work in analog, but often times it was tedious getting the flip of the direction switch just right. My recommendation to analog operators is to invest in QSI's analog remote control system known as the Quantum Engineer. This small control panel connects to your existing DC power pack allowing you to directly command and enjoy most of the features incorporated in these Quantum equipped locomotives. On the other hand, I would strongly suggest taking a second look at converting to Digital Command Control!

In DCC mode, Quantum supports the NMRA 0-12 function key standard that allows the operator to access a number of authentic locomotive sounds. For the 0-6-0 steamer this includes bell, whistle, the proper four-steam-chuffs-per-driver revolution, coupler crash, squealing brakes and flanges, and a whole host of incidental sounds such as the dynamo at startup, cylinder cocks, air pump, blower hiss, water injector, air let-off, and blower pop-off. For the F3 and Dash 8 you'll hear either a single or multi-chime air horn, mechanical bell, cooling fans, varying rpm levels of the appropriate prime mover, air pump, dynamic brake, and so on. All of these sounds can be adjusted to your liking



Atlas O supports their innovative O-scale 2-rail track system with a variety of accessories such as a locomotive turntable and a number of single and double track bridge designs. Their 20-inch long Deck Girder Bridge Kit, as shown here, is simple to assemble and features metal construction with detailed rivet patterns and cross support members, a UV compatible ABS plastic deck, which features realistic wood grain and nut-bolt-washer details, and walkways with metal handrails.

NCE Corporation, a well-regarded supplier to the HO-scale community, brings command control to the O-scale 2-rail market. They've taken their popular Procab and Powerhouse system and upgraded it to O-scale standards enabling it to supply a full 10 Amps for operating multiples of these larger locomotives simultaneously on a layout. The PH-10 package includes the Procab, command station, and a separate booster. The modeler will still need to supply their own power source (not to exceed 22 volts): in our case, an NCE 18 Volt 10 Amp transformer (not shown). The spiral-bound 84-page owner's manual provides easy-to-follow instructions and tips on setting up the system, which can be accomplished in just 20 minutes. The NCE system uses standard NMRA DCC protocols so modelers already experienced in HO- and N-scale command control and looking to step up in size will have no trouble converting to O scale.

following the well-written instructions in their owner's manuals.

I was impressed with each of the sample locomotives when run through the test layout — not only with the smooth and quiet can motor driven powertrains, but with the sound as well. If you're like me and have been pleased with the QSI-equipped locos in HO, then you'll find the sound effects even more enriching in this larger scale due to the fact that there is ample space in the carbody or tender for larger and higher quality speakers. They easily rival, if not exceed, the sound systems that I've experienced with 3-rail locomotives. Of course, a user-friendly DCC controller like the NCE Procab helps bring out the full performance and audio potential of which these Atlas O Gold Edition models are capable.

Finally, all three of the locomotives we tested easily negotiated 36-inch radius curves and number 5 turnouts on our temporary layout. In fact, there is quite a number of cataloged Atlas O engines and freight cars that are right at home on these tighter curves, which just goes to show that you don't necessarily need a huge amount of real estate to start an O-scale pike.

The Future of O Scale

You can consider this *Model Railroad News*' official O-scale primer as this "all-scale news monthly" opens the door into another realm of this great hobby. What I have reported on here is just the groundwork for the numerous possibilities modern O-scale two-rail model railroading has to offer. In future articles, we'll delve more into rolling stock, accessories, and additional motive power as items become available. Also planned are some simple DCC conversions plus, we will continue in our tutorial on the NCE command control and Atlas O track systems as they relate to our O-scale two-rail product testing. Welcome to the world of O scale!

Editor's Note to Readers and Manufacturers: Let us know about 2-rail O-scale equipment you'd like to see covered in MRN*—We know it's out there!*

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REVIEW HO

Big Ford Expedition is Latest Treat from River Point Station

Review and Photos by Bill Cawthon

2007 Ford Expedition, HO scale, MSRP: $18.00 each
XLT w/17-inch wheels, all-terrain tires, Silver/Charcoal (#536-7601.04)
Eddie Bauer w/20-inch wheels, low-profile tires, Redfire/Gold (#536-7605.15)
Limited w/20-inch wheels, low-profile tires, White Sand Metallic (#536-7609.21)

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www.RiverPointStation.com

RON ELSDOERFER of River Point Station reminds me of a master brewer; always sure he can make his beer just a little better and determined to take the time to do it. After introducing HO models of the Ford F-250 and F-350 that were widely regarded as some of the best vehicle replicas ever offered in 1:87 scale, he went back and made them better.

As was true of the pickups, RPS' new Ford Expedition has been in the works for some time and model railroaders and collectors in North America and Europe have been waiting eagerly for its release. But, as is his custom, Ron has been tweaking the brew to perfection and when these models hit your local hobby shop, all the delay will be forgotten.

The prototype for the newest River Point Station model is the 2007 Ford Expedition EL, the largest SUV in Ford's lineup. RPS will offer the Expedition in three trim levels, from the base XLT through the Eddie Bauer, and on to the Limited (there's a fourth trim level, the top-of-the-line King Ranch, but it's not in the RPS lineup at this time). There is also a Special Service Package designed for emergency and government services, and the RPS replicas of this version will be coming later this year.

Inspired by the success of the Explorer and the rapidly growing SUV market, Ford introduced the larger Expedition in 1997 to replace the big Ford Bronco and take on the Chevrolet Tahoe as the craze for big sport utility vehicles swept the United States.

Based on the popular F-150 platform, the Expedition was a success; quickly gaining a major share of the large SUV market and making millions of dollars in profits for Ford.

For the first five years it was in production, the Expedition had no trouble trouncing the Tahoe. In 1999, sales totaled 233,125 units, their all-time high.

On June 13, 2001, less than five years after it went on sale, the one-millionth new Expedition was delivered to a Buena Park, California, police sergeant who bought it to tow his boat. By the end of its fifth year, total sales of the Expedition were over 376,000 units ahead of the Chevy, an amount equal to 2.5 years of the Tahoe's average sales during the period.

But something happened after that: the big Ford lost its mojo. By the end of 2002, the Tahoe had taken the lead in the yearly race and has never given it back. That was about the same time the shine began to wear off the American love affair with big, truck-based SUVs. Combined sales of the Expedition and Tahoe peaked at 417,080 units in 2001 and have declined ever since. When gas prices skyrocketed last spring and summer, SUV sales looked like they had been gut shot and the bleeding only worsened as the economy cratered in the third and fourth quarters of 2008. By the end of the year, Ford had managed to sell just 55,123 Expeditions and in the first three months of 2009, even with greatly reduced fuel prices, just 5,489 of the big trucks left dealer lots.

The 2007 model year brought a small sales uptick to 90,287 units as Ford rolled out a new Expedition, the EL. Designed to replace the giant Excursion, the EL is a stretched version of the refreshed-for-2007 Expedition, a good-looking truck that gave Ford a competitor to the Chevy Suburban and brought in some additional sales. I was in the audience as Cisco Codina, former Vice President of Ford's North American Sales and Marketing, introduced the big EL to the press. The Ford blue curtain lifted and there was a dazzling white truck, very much like the sample White Sand Metallic Expedition EL Limited we received from River Point Station. In fact, when I saw the RPS model, I was reminded of that day.

The full-size Expedition EL had the misfortune to be launched into a perfect storm. It was too big, too thirsty and,

River Point Station's new Ford Expeditions will be hitting your local hobby retailer soon. Like every earlier model from RPS, the Expedition is an exquisite replica of the prototype.

River Point Station has captured key spotting features of the various versions. Note the Limited's body-colored grille and larger, 20-inch wheels.

most important, too late. But I strongly doubt anything but success awaits its miniature replica.

The Mini Expedition

The River Point Station models are a credit to their prototypes. Checking the dimensions, I found the HO Expeditions to be within a scale inch of factory specifications.

The factory-color-matched paint is superb; photos of the White Sand Metallic Limited don't do it justice. The Redfire/Gold Eddie Bauer looks just like the full-size Expedition EL in the Ford publicity photos.

The tampo printing is sharp and opaque; even the tiny script "Ford" is legible inside its blue oval.

The rear windows and backlight have a smooth, dark tint, while the front windows and windshield have a light tint, just as on the 1/1 version. Ron told me it was quite a challenge to get it right.

Since these are River Point Station models, it goes without saying the tooling is world-class. Body panel lines are crisp and well defined without the rounding that is often found on lesser replicas. The glass fits flush all around, adding to the realism.

A nice touch is the fact the base XLT model has the standard 17-inch wheels and higher-profile tires while the Limited and Eddie Bauer have the upscale 20-inch wheels and low-profile tires.

Before I start picking at nits, it should be noted our samples were pre-production evaluation pieces and there may be changes between now and the time the regular production products appear at your favorite hobby retailer.

The biggest problem I observed was the outside rearview mirrors; they should be level instead of angling upward as can be seen in the photos. I checked Ford factory photos of the real 2007 Expedition to make sure my impression was accurate. Knowing Ron, this is an issue I expect will be addressed before the regular production models are shipped. While we're on the subject of mirrors, the Limited's should be body-colored.

Another nit is the side rails of the roof racks. Only the XLT and Eddie Bauer have all-black racks. The Limited has bright side rails. This might be corrected, but if not and the

The RPS Expedition will be first offered in three civilian trim levels. A Special Service model will come later. Top to bottom: the popular Eddie Bauer in Redfire and gold, the premium Limited in White Sand Metallic, and the base XLT in silver and charcoal.

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The RPS Expedition is a good-looking model from any angle.

error bothers you, it's a matter of a brush, some matte silver paint and a few moments of your time.

A (literally) small problem is the badging. Based on references supplied by Ford, all the trucks should have a small "EL" badge below the "Expedition" badge on each front door. In addition, the rear badge is an all-in-one piece with "Expedition," "EL" and the trim level, such as "Limited" or "Eddie Bauer." Apparently there was a production change, as Ron sent me images of an EL showing the "all-in-one" badge on both doors and the tailgate. However, with the strongest magnifier I had on hand, the badging on the model just says "Expedition." Ron said accurately reproducing the "all-in-one" badge was just not possible, especially since the badging on the RPS Expeditions is a raised area in the tooling that is then printed. We're talking about very small print here.

Ready to Hit the Road

Nits having been picked, I can safely say none of them should have any effect on your enjoyment of the River Point Station Expeditions. These are truly good models that live up to the lofty standards set by RPS' earlier releases. According to Ron Elsdoerfer, the regular production models should be shipping to hobby shops by the end of this month or the beginning of July, so get your pre-orders in now. You don't want to miss this one.

New Cat 320D L from Norscot

O — Norscot has released a new diecast model of the Cat 320D L Hydraulic Excavator. It features realistic rolling metal tracks, great detail, and multiple moving parts. The excavator (#55214) has a suggested retail price of $66.95.

Measuring 7-1/2 inches by 2-1/2 inches by 2-3/8-inches (18.9 by 6.4 by 5.9 centimeters), the model shows off the Caterpillar Power Edge trade dress design and many other features including: moveable boom, stick and bucket, 360 degree rotation on chassis, relistic hoses and grab rails, and clear windows with interior detail.

Norscot Group, 1000 West Donges Bay Rd, Mequon, WI 53092; 800-653-3313; Fax: 800-653-4904; E-mail: norscot@norscot.com; www.norscot

New Beer Trucks from Howard's Hobby

HO — Howard's Hobby Shop has released the first two trucks in the series for the New England Brewing Co., which is in Woodbridge, CT.

These beer trucks are available in two different styles. The first has the company's logo and slogan on both sides and rear of the truck. The second features the Sea Hag IPA logo on both sides and the company's logo on the back. Each truck also comes with Connecticut license plates on the front and rear of the truck. The trucks retail for $18.00 each.

Howard's Hobby, 116 Silver Hill Rd, Ansonia, CT 06401; 203-732-5346; www.howardshobby.com

Kane is Able—New DuraPlate Trailer from Deluxe

N — Deluxe Innovations will be releasing a 53-foot American Highways DuraPlate Trailer. KANE, based in Scranton, Pennsylvania, manages a truckload fleet of over 900 trailers and operates 16 U.S. distribution centers across the country. The models (#713111 & #713112) are expected in the third quarter of 2009 for $15.95.

Deluxe Innovations, 9 Whippany Rd Unit 10, Whippany, NJ 07981-1540; 973-887-3919; Fax: 973-887-5123; E-mail: info@deluxeinnovations.com; www.deluxeinnovations.com

New 1:87 Ford COE tractor kits for 40s-era modelers

HO — Sylvan Scale Models is offering four new 1940s-era Ford COE trucks as unpainted, easy to assemble, resin kits in HO scale. These kits feature etched stainless steel mirror and wiper sets, rubber tires, and poseable front wheels. Also included in each kit is a driver figure.

The new kits being offered are the Ford COE Highway Tractor (#V-085) for $15.95, the Ford COE Cab with Chassis (#V-086) for $15.95, the Ford COE with Stake Body (#V-087) for $19.95, and the Ford COE with Dump Body (V-088) for $19.95. The trucks were originally manufactured from 1940 through 1947 and could be found performing various tasks in big cities and small towns alike.

Sylvan Scale Models, 32229 Sylvan Road RR 2, Parkhill, ON N0M 2K0, Canada; 519-294-6601; Fax: 519-294-0123; E-mail: office@sylvan.isp.ca; www.isp.on.ca/sylvan

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99243	40′ container, 3-pk, APL, steel, one container nbr	$21.95
99244	20′ container, 3-pk, APL, vert. logo, one container nbr	$16.95
99245	20′ container, 3-pk, APL, large logo, one container nbr	$16.95
99246	40′ container, 3-pk, APL, vert. logo, one container nbr	$21.95
99260	45′ container, 3-pk, Evergreen, 3 container nbrs	$24.95
99295	20′ container, 3-pk, US military, 3 container nbrs	$17.95
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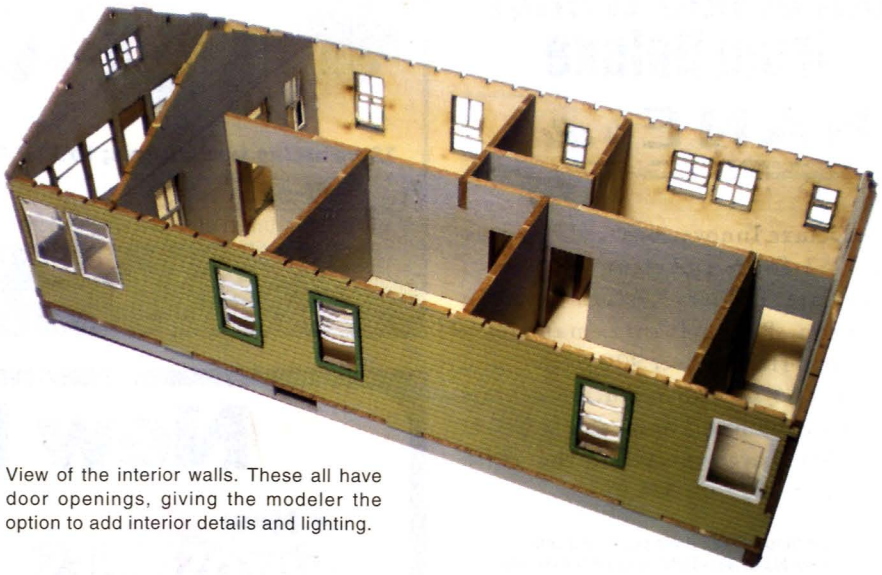
REVIEW HO

Blair Line Offers a Home Away from Home



View of the interior walls. These all have door openings, giving the modeler the option to add interior details and lighting.

Review and Photos by Denis Dunning

ATSF 6-room Section House, HO scale (#194), MSRP: $59.95
Footprint, building only: 7 inches x 4 inches
Also available in N scale (#094), MSRP: $39.95

Blair Line LLC
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Carthage, MO 64836
417-359-8300 • Fax: 417-359-8844
www.blairline.com

BLAIR LINE is now offering a structure that is seldom included on a model railroad: the section house, a building for housing station and maintenance personnel in areas where regular housing was not available. This Blair Line kit is modeled after a section house used throughout the AT&SF system.

Although not covered in the scope of this review, Blair Line also offers the section house in N scale for $39.95.

Primary residents in a section house were often station agents and foremen of maintenance of way gangs. This particular building has three small bedrooms, two large bedrooms, a bathroom, and a screened-in porch for relaxing. According to Blair, after they were retired by the railroad, many of the buildings were sold for use as private residences. This type of structure still survives in small numbers, providing for a multi-use structure either for railroad use or in your residential area.

The screened-in porch has screens printed on the acetate. The windows and doors are made from layers or pre-cut pieces. All of the windows, doors, and corner trim are provided in large sections making a cleaner look.

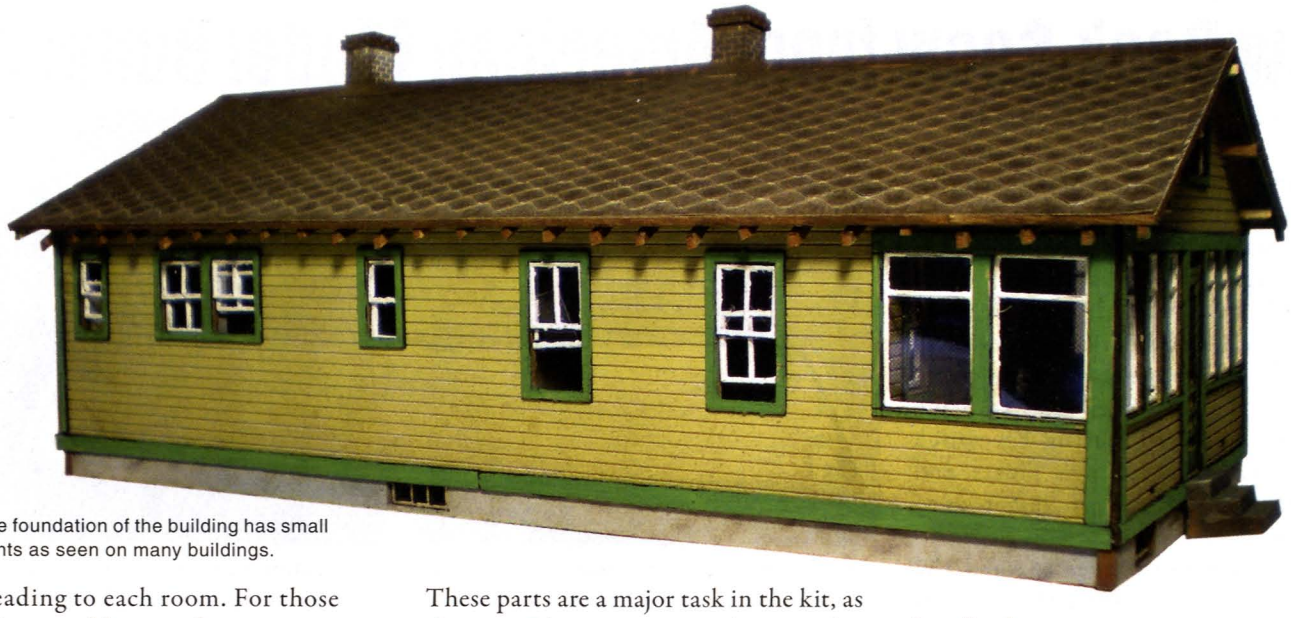
Blair Line's Section House

The kit is composed of well-engineered laser-cut clapboard siding, windows, doors, and trim pieces. The roof is composed of sheet wood that is covered with self-stick diamond-shaped shingles. Two types of window glazing are included which will be covered later. Two plastic chimneys complete the kit.

One nice touch with the laser-cut pieces is a small 'V' added at each tab that holds the pieces in place. A small thing, but it sure makes it easier to remove each component.

The instruction sheet is very well done with text, isometric drawings, and photos showing each step in the construction process. A nice feature is a sheet showing each individual piece on the various carrier sheets. The instructions flow very easily and make this a kit that is suitable for even the novice craftsman-type wood kit builder.

Exterior walls have clapboard siding and the kit also includes plain interior walls as well. These are not just support structures, each wall has the door open-



The foundation of the building has small vents as seen on many buildings.

ing leading to each room. For those wanting to add a complete interior, this will make the task quite easy. All of the various walls have tab and slot alignment pieces. This makes for a very sturdy building, as well as keeping all the walls square.

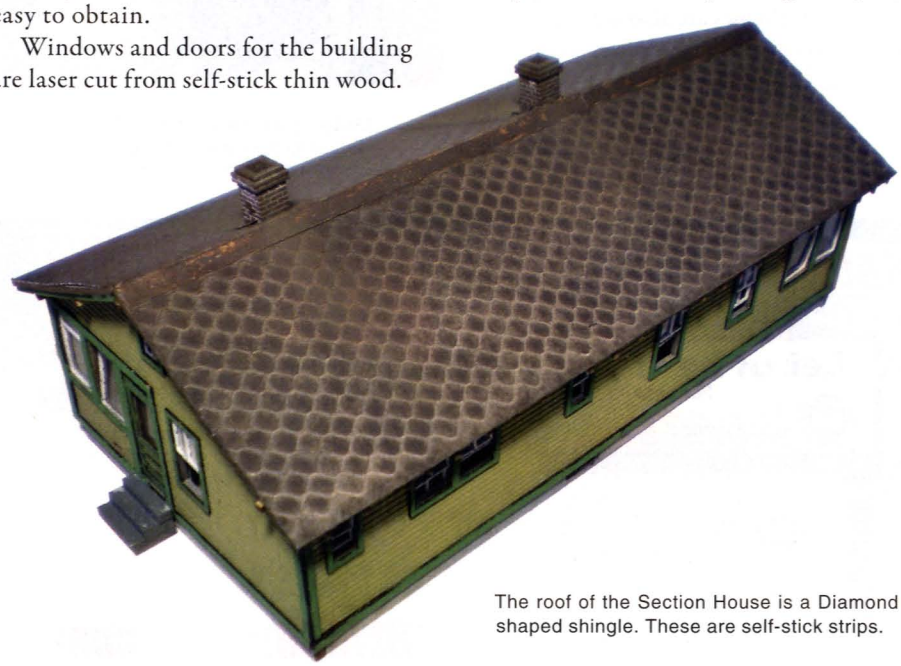
Another nice feature on this kit is the rafter tails. These are 'V' shaped rafter tails that fit into slots in the top of the side walls. They are designed to line up the rafter tails with the slope of the roof.

The building is constructed atop a floor and foundation piece that has slots for all of the walls, both exterior and interior. All of the parts should be painted before you begin construction. A coat of primer sprayed on both sides of each part will make the painting easier. All of the trim pieces are separate parts making the two-tone paint scheme very easy to obtain.

Windows and doors for the building are laser cut from self-stick thin wood. These parts are a major task in the kit, as there are 74 separate pieces that must be assembled. Don't be intimidated with this as all of the parts fit perfectly and following the steps in the instructions will provide an excellent finished appearance.

After cutting the windows and doors from the carrier piece, be sure to sand down the small tabs that are left on the top and bottom of the pieces. There are two types of glazing for the windows. For the end of the building with the porch there is window glazing with screens printed on the acetate. All of the glazing for the various sized windows and doors are cut to fit them exactly.

The instructions call for the glazing to be added before the windows are removed from the carrier sheet. As these are very delicate windows this will help keep them from being damaged as you handle them.



The roof of the Section House is a Diamond shaped shingle. These are self-stick strips.

A nice touch with the trim on the building is the combination of the window frames and the wall corner trim being one piece. This gives a much cleaner look to the finish of the walls. These parts are also on self-stick wood. Be sure they are lined up properly before pressing them in place. The adhesive is quite strong, and once in place, the parts cannot be easily realigned.

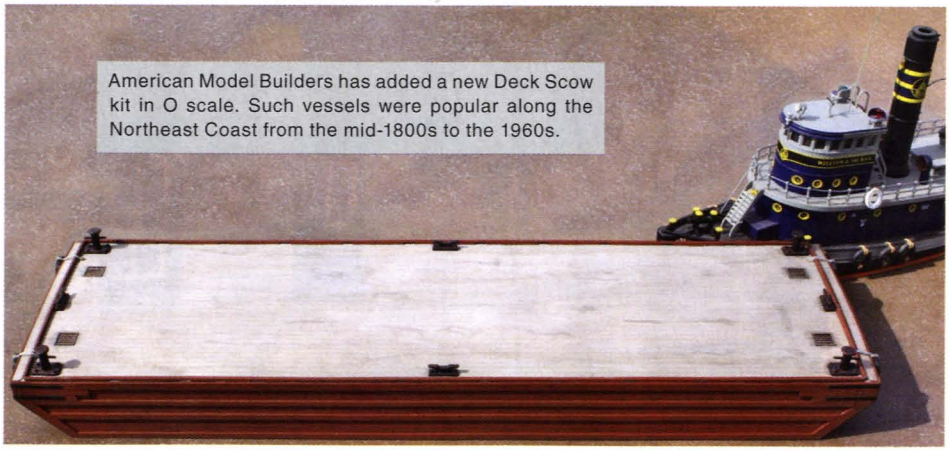
The roof is composed of two pieces of wood that have slots cut to fit tabs on the top of the walls. This helps align the roof and adds stability to the building. The roofing itself is made of strips of diamond-shaped shingles. These are pre-cut on self-stick paper. There are etched lines on the under roof sections which help you keep the shingles straight. It is best to paint the roof after the shingles are in place as some paints may affect the adhesive. The roof on the model shown was spray painted with a flat brown with a light overspray of black.

Once the roof is completed, all that remains is the attachment of the gable trim and small trim pieces that fit into pre-cut slots in the walls. Add the chimneys, build up the stairs, and you are finished.

Final Thoughts

Blair Line has developed an excellent kit and everything fit exactly as it should. I spent about eight hours building the Section House and had a very enjoyable time. The parts are well designed, the instructions are excellent, and the finished structure will make a very different addition to any railroad.

New Deck Scow from American Model Builders



American Model Builders has added a new Deck Scow kit in O scale. Such vessels were popular along the Northeast Coast from the mid-1800s to the 1960s.

O — American Model Builders has released a new laser-cut Deck Scow kit. The barge was the Rail-Marine equivalent to the railroad flat car. Many of the United States' "Eastern" railroads maintained huge "railroad navies."

The NYC, PRR, LV, CNJ, Erie, DL&W, NH, and others all had a variety of craft on their rosters, everything from Railroad Harbor Tugboats, to Stick Lighters, Scows, Floating Livestock "Yards," Station Floats, Car Floats, and Ferries, among others, too numerous to mention here.

Many of these barges roamed the Northern East Coast, from Maine, southward to the Carolinas, all carrying railroad freight. The primary concentration of activity ranged from Portland, Maine to Philadelphia, with the largest operation centered around New York City. The historical records of tonnage moved by the rail-marine craft is astonishing. In most cases, this tonnage was called lighterage by the rail-marine folks. Lighterage was, simply put, just about anything the railroad navies hauled from one freight dock to another. Many times barges and stick lighters were towed to tie up alongside ocean going ships in order to load the lighterage on board, often as the ship was imminently ready to sail. Anything one can imagine was transported this way from the mid-1800s to the 1960s.

AMB's Deck Scow features laser-cut materials, uses Tab & Slot and Peel & Stick technology for ease of assembly, and includes cast-resin detail parts such as cleats, bollards, and tire bumpers, as well as laser-scribed wood decking that displays the proper camber. The assembled model measures 24 inches long by 7.5 inches wide by 3.25 inches tall. The barge (#467) retails for $124.95.

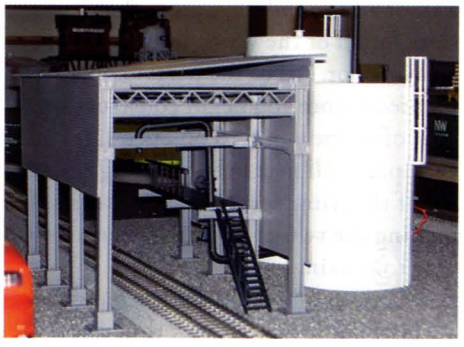
American Model Builders, 8229 Brentwood Industrial Dr, Saint Louis, MO 63144; 314-646-8588; Fax: 314-646-8583; E-mail: laserkit@aol.com; www.laserkit.com

New Fuel Station from Model Structures Inc.

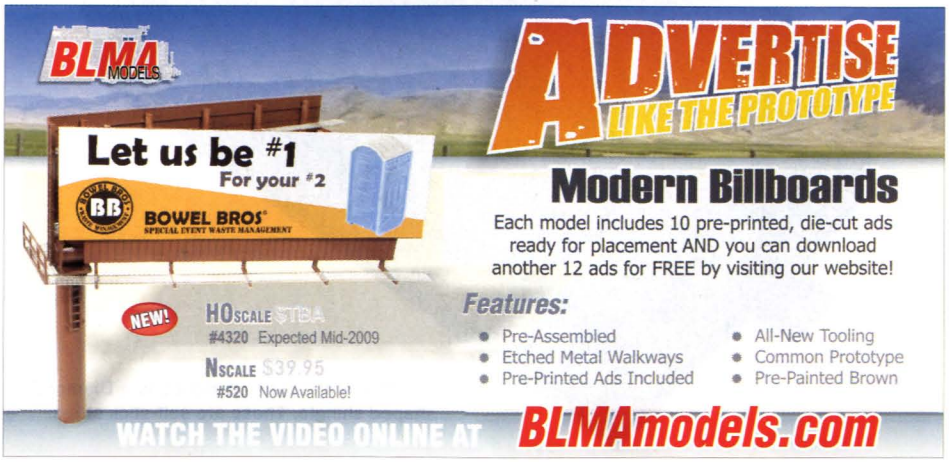
O — Model Structures Inc. has released a fuel transfer station, which can be used two ways. The main building can be used as a trackside structure fitted over track to allow tank cars to move under the refill spout, or it may be used as a stand alone facility in an industrial setting where the big 16 wheeler tractor-trailer rigs can be parked underneath for fuel loading.

The service facility footprint is approximately 16 inches by 18 inches. The two tanks are about 7.5 inches, and 9.5 inches tall and approximately 4 inches in diameter. The shed measures approximately 12 inches long by 7 inches wide by 7.5 inches high, with approximately 4.5 inches of clearance inside for track and train.

The fuel station comes either undecorated or decorated with multiple railroad names. The two tanks are a light gray color. Other color schemes are also available. The tanks connect with one pipe, while the smaller tank connects to the shed with a second pipe connection under the catwalk. The fuel station retails for $159.48 undecorated or $166.48 decorated.



Model Structures, Inc. 602-615-8593; E-mail: bridgesanddecking@q.com; www.modelstructuresinc.com



Micro-Mark's Black Poly Fiber Adds Depth to Landscapes

Micro-Marks' poly fiber is used to add depth and dimention to forest scenes such as the one shown.

ALL SCALES — Micro-Mark has released their black poly fiber for tree-covered landscapes. The company states that the black fiber is more realistic and dramatic than green fiber. Simply cover the tree armatures with the black poly fiber and then dust it with your choice of green turf to add depth and dimension to your forest scenes. The fiber (#84152) retails for $5.95 for 4 ounces.

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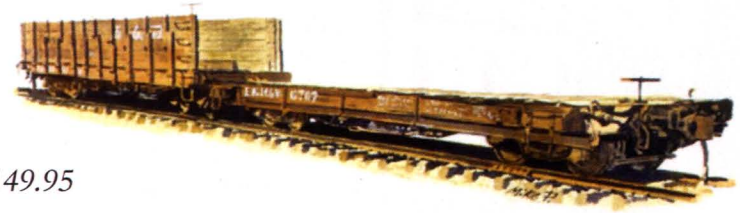

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REVIEW **Large Scale**

A Visit to Piko Town

Piko's Qwik Kits transform garden layouts

Review and Photos by John Sipple

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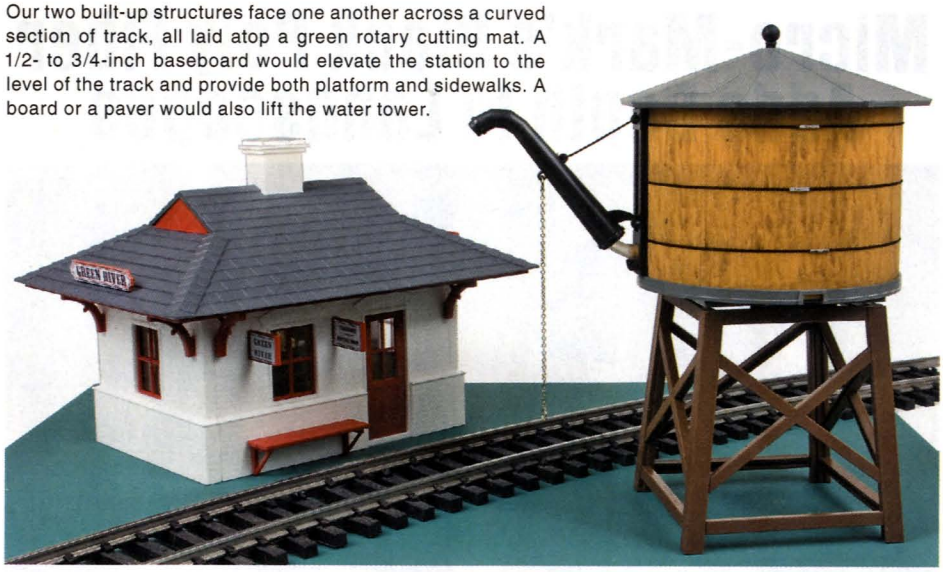


Our two built-up structures face one another across a curved section of track, all laid atop a green rotary cutting mat. A 1/2- to 3/4-inch baseboard would elevate the station to the level of the track and provide both platform and sidewalks. A board or a paver would also lift the water tower.

PIKO TOWN. That's my name for this structural cornucopia. I'm going to share with you two built-up structures and four Qwik Kits, enough to start a nice, little town by the tracks in your garden. The two built-ups are the Green River Station and a wooden water tower. They are all designed to be installed on an outdoor garden layout where all of them will endure the weather.

The two built-up structures only need for you to remove them from their boxes and place them on the layout. The station is open underneath, and so you might consider mounting it on a board that has been coated with weather-resistant paint or finish. This board could also add the station's platform and some sidewalk on the other side. One side has the entrance on the street, complete with signs and a bench. The other side has a ticket and dispatch window.

The Qwik Kits give us four small town businesses: the Daily Grind Coffee House, the Book Worm bookstore, the Music Shop, and the Furniture store. Each of these comes in the form of a kit and uses the old Western flat front store building. With the roof peak perpendicular to the street, a wooden facade would square up the front by obscuring the slant of the roof.

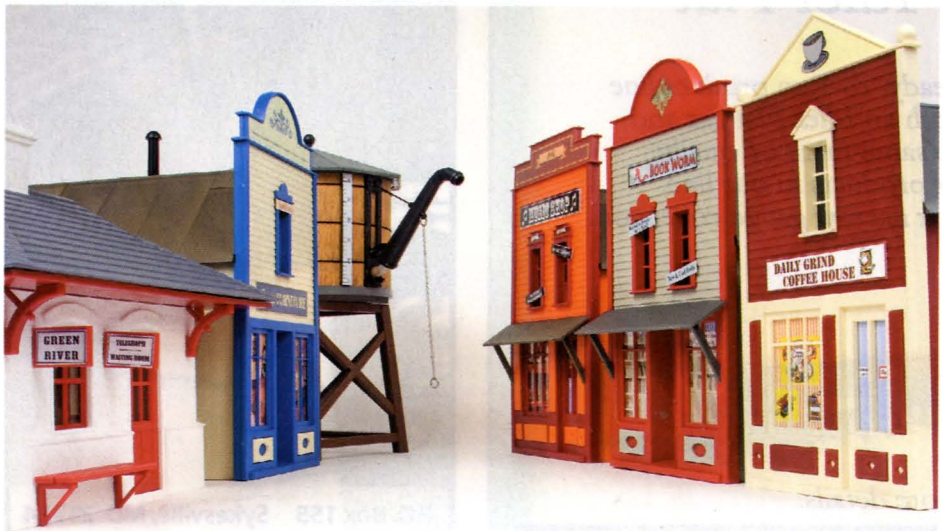
The Issue of Scale — Or Not

One of Garden Railroading's dark secrets is that there are six scales, and all share the same #1 track gauge. In 1:32, 1.77 inch track gauge represents 4-feet 8-1/2-inch standard gauge. By the time we get to 1:20.3, it equals 3-foot narrow gauge. In all, we have considerable offerings in 1:32, 1:29, 1:24, 1:22.5, and 1:20.3. There is also Maine two-foot gauge in 1:13.7. When I reviewed Piko's large scale train set recently, I found it to be somewhere between 1:32 and 1:29. I also found these structures to be in a different range.

Piko refers to all of its Large Scale Garden offerings as G Scale, 1:22.5. The front door on the coffee house measures 1.382 inches wide and 3.625 inches high. In G scale, this would be a door just a hair over 31 inches wide by 81-1/2 inches high. That's pretty narrow, considering most store doors then and now would be on the order of 36 inches wide. The height, however, is quite consistent. At 1:24 scale, we get a door 33+ by 87 inches. At 1:29, it becomes 40 by 105 inches, a bit much. On the other hand, 1:20.3 Fn3 scale becomes 28 wide by 73-1/2, not enough.

However, just about the time you've decided whether this fits with your scale or not, then we have to consider the issue of proximity. In this situation, proximity describes how close one object is to another. If you put all these buildings in one town together, they all look fine because they are all G Scale. If you put a 1:20.3 guy and a 1:32 gal side by side, either he's a giant or she's a midget. Put them both in front of these buildings, and they look wrong. However, you can mix scale items on your layout so long as you don't put them close to each other.

Currently, the garden railroad marketplace doesn't offer plastic buildings except in H (1:24) and G (1:22.5), and they play fairly well together. In the absence of 1:29 and 1:20.3 plastic structures, people resort to wood kits or homemade items.



Here we have all six structures grouped in an improbable manner to face the camera. It makes a colorful assembly, and that's a huge point here. These bright colors add nice punctuation to the natural colors of your garden layout.

With proximity power, these buildings will liven up some corner of your layout without being too large or too small. By mounting them up on half inch plywood or thicker, your buildings sit taller and become "larger." Similarly, when using these structures on a generally 1:29 layout, set them away from the track and put them on a very thin bottom plate.

Built-ups

Our hobby lives in a ready-to-run world, and "built-ups" are the architectural equivalent. The water tower is nicely done and is appropriate for any garden layout that features one or more steam locomotives. If it isn't tall enough for your locos as they pass by, simply perch it on a paver. You can also station it near a servicing spur but in a manner where a passing loco won't get tangled with it.

Just to be accurate, a station is a place while a depot is a building. With the station name being "Green River," the depot building is ready to go right to work. Many Western and other rural depots were as small and humble as this ready-to-use structure. The roof lifts off, making it easy to secure the depot to your own choice of bottom board (not included). If you then wish to glue on the roof, that would be your decision. You could replace the Green River sign by creating your own and printing it from your computer. Then cut it to fit, glue it in place, and give a couple of coats of Krylon clear matte spray to preserve it from the weather.

Qwik-Kits

Kits are appealing to us because we don't have to pay for someone else to do assembly work that we can do ourselves. We can also perform modifications as we build the kits. The most likely alteration for many modelers would be to "blacken" the interior of the buildings. If you don't, an interior light will not only show out through the windows, it will glow through the walls. There is also no structural interior such as stairways and a second floor. They have a footprint of about eight inches deep and five-and-a-half inches wide. This translates into about a G Scale 15 scale feet deep by a few inches over 10 feet wide.

I built all four just the way they come, and they went together in ten minutes or less. Where the sides fit into a slot on the front wall, I found either the slot was too

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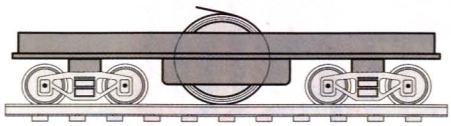

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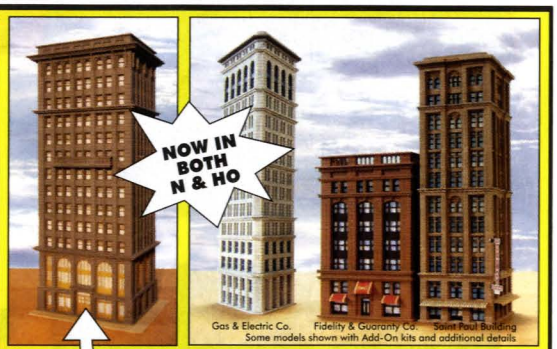

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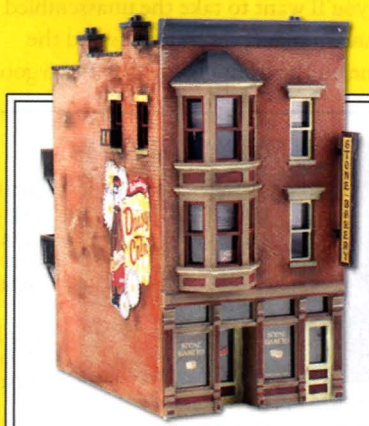

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The kit contents of the Music Shop Qwik-Kit have the sides holding one another up. The pins to hold the sides together at the corners are on sprues. Each kit comes with a small tube of plastic cement.

The roof on the left has been glued and pinned together. The back and a side are shown with their pins, all ready for installation. If you chose to "blacken" the inside for lighting purposes, now would be the time to do it.

thin or the side was too thick. Some sandpaper or file work will settle this with fair quickness. There are pins that drop through corner lugs inside, and despite the lack of directions, I found it best to mount the two side walls to the front and deal with the thickness issue first. When they are assembled, you can then install the rear wall and then add the roof.

To blacken or opaque the interior, you could use either paint or black paper. For paint, you'll want to take the unassembled walls and mask off the windows and the roofline on the front. Then give it two good, thick coats of black paint. You could then apply a nice taupe or some other color over top, perhaps requiring a couple of more coats. For black construction paper, size up each piece and then carefully cut out the window holes and then glue the piece inside the wall. You could cover the inside of the black paper or paint with scraps of wallpaper or other patterned prints.

Details

The back of the roof has a color-matched barge rafter that goes with the window trim. There are three windows on each side, which are both nice and also strange. These store buildings were usually platted onto small lots without much more than an alleyway between them. The added expense for a view of the alley wasn't worth much to most builders but it would provide some interior light during the day. Still, you can put curtains in the windows and make your building a stand-alone structure.

The signs and window interiors come installed, generally. As a rule, geographers will tell you that dry goods, groceries, a cafe, and a tavern would be some of the first places in this new metropolis. There's nothing that prevents you from creating your own signs on your laser printer, sealing them with a matte clear spray, and replacing the main window display to suit the new tenant.

It should be noted that Piko makes a General Store, Hardware Store, and numerous other businesses either in this series or in other architectural types. In fact, if you visit Silvergate's web site, you can view the entire collection of G buildings and get a better idea of what is available.

There's a window high in the front of two stores, and a pair of them in the other two. These indicate a limited second floor with walls that sloped at the top caused

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Standard Relay House....
Typical of those sighted along railroad right of ways throughout the US from the 1940's to present times, these structures were used to house electrical equipment for signal operation, crossing gates, and CTC systems.

Our kit includes two popular sizes: 6' x 6' and 6' x 8'. With a bit of kit-bashing, other sizes can be created using these parts.

Grandt Line Products 1040 B Shary Court Concord, CA 94518
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Viewed from behind, the Music Shop is a garish orange that actually brings a spritely bit of color to a layout. I'd like to see a back door, but I could add my own without much difficulty. Given the orange and dark red, do we dare to call this the Hiawatha Music Shop?

by the roofline. This might indicate more merchandise area, a stock room, or even sleeping quarters. The rear wall has a lower window, consistent with a staircase landing. There is no rear door, though such buildings almost universally had a rear entrance. On the same web site, you can view building components that include doors and windows you could add.

These buildings often had a shed structure, either closed or open, where trash, cartons, firewood, and other stuff would be piled. Among the Piko building offerings is an outhouse and a stable, other common backyard structures. It wouldn't be unusual for such a building to have an oil tank, a coalbunker, a corral, and a board fence around the back. In short, this building kit is like every other kit in our hobby: a starting point.

Back to Piko Town

Whether you opt for the built-ups or the Qwik-Kits, Piko has created a very large line of structures and buildings of all sorts. From European to Nostalgic Western, they have an extensive line of layout-enhancers. I guess our next job is to compare some figures to put around your garden railroad.

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REVIEW HO

Street Tracks Made Easy with PHM Track Covers

PHM's Track Covers make it easy to model an old-fashioned city street with inlaid tracks.

Review and Photos by Stephen Priest

HO Track Covers - Brick Street System, various styles and color, 4 pieces per package, MSRP: $14.00/package

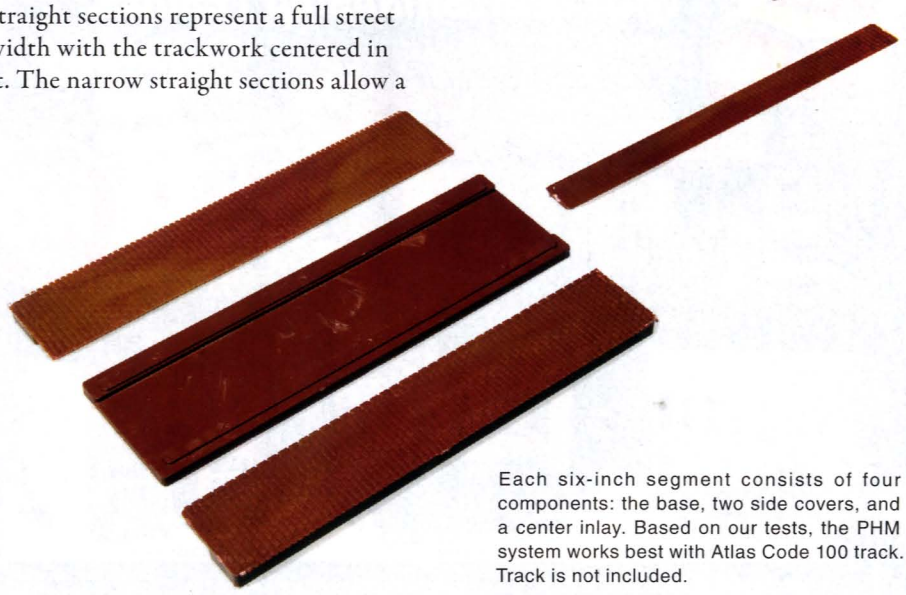
Pennsylvania Heritage Models Ltd.
715 Ridgeway Rd.
Birdsboro, PA 19508
610-856-1166
www.paheritagemodels.com

ONE of the most challenging trackwork settings to model is embedded track contained within a street. Traction modelers know this, as do modelers that feature sections of their railroad that have street running. The PHM HO Track Covers System makes simulating street running easy.

Using the PHM Track Cover System

The system is packaged in 6-3/4-inch-radius, wide straight, and narrow straight sections. The sharp-radius curves will be of use to the trolley/traction modelers but will not allow standard railroad operation due to the extreme curvature. The wide straight sections represent a full street width with the trackwork centered in it. The narrow straight sections allow a brick inlay complete with the trackwork to be added to a concrete or asphalt street. All systems are available in a typical red brick or Belgian cobblestone gray color. The pieces are molded in plastic and can be painted and weathered to match anything that the modeler desires. The system provides good track clearance that facilitates the use of an abrasive block track cleaner if needed. Track cleaning is an important part of reliable operation and regular cleaning can damage street trackage detailing. PHM thought of this and designed around the issue.

The Track Cover system is really a track enclosing system. This system consists of four injected plastic pieces per six-inch length. First down is a base plate that has keyed outer edges that will hold the edge brick fascia sections. You will probably need to clear a little flash off the model to insure a correct, tight fit. There are also injector pin/vent extrusions that will need to be removed from the plastic as well. But the plastic is soft and can be carved quickly with a hobby knife. The flex track is then set into a holding groove and the two edge brick fascia pieces can be added. The final step is the addition of the center brick fascia piece. This piece is held in place by the flex track itself. Please note the system is designed for Atlas Code 100 flex track. I tried several other manufacturer's Code 100 and several different types of Code 83 track. The Atlas track was clearly the design target the system was designed for. The Code 83 track will not even drop into the base trough because of the wide tie structure.


Each six-inch segment consists of four components: the base, two side covers, and a center inlay. Based on our tests, the PHM system works best with Atlas Code 100 track. Track is not included.

For my test I created a straight two-foot-long section of street trackage that will serve our club layout as a REA car spot. The brick sections will butt up to a freight house as is typical in many locations throughout the US. The base "trough" sections were sanded square and butt joined together with Tenax-7 solvent cement. These pieces were aligned against a steel straightedge. Once the solvent had evaporated and the pieces were bonded, I adhered the trough base to the railroad sub-roadbed, taking time to position the base where I wanted it. The assembly was allowed to dry overnight. Atlas Code 100 flex track was cut to the correct length and placed into the trough. I used GE clear silicon to adhere the track to the trough. The edge brick fascia pieces were added next. These were edge-sanded prior to their installation to ensure a tight, true fit. Again, I created a 24-inch-long section of bricked street from the six-inch modules, so we needed four of the sec-

PHM Track Covers come in two different widths for straight track and one width for curved track. The curved track assembly is designed for a tight, 6.75-inch radius curve best suited for trolleys and street cars.

tions to cover the distance. Finally, the center brick fascia piece was added, completing the installation. In retrospect, I should have painted the material prior to installation. While the appearance of the plastic brick is acceptable, it would have been better if the pieces were painted.

Final Thoughts

The system is impressive, although, limited. I would like to have had larger-radius curve sections that would support the use of standard freight equipment. That would be a great addition to the product line.

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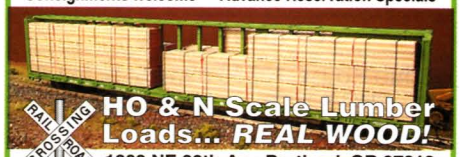

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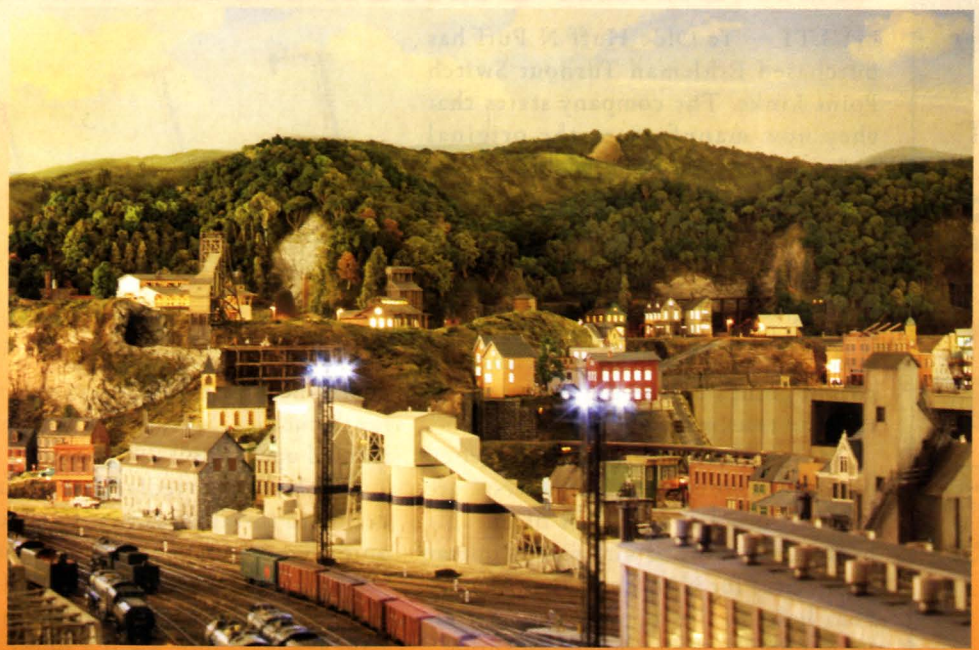

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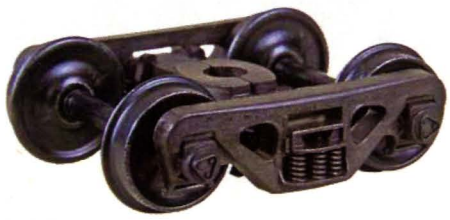
New Whisker Coupler from Kadee

S-2 ACL 70 ton truck also released

HO — Kadee Quality Products Co. has released their new 147 Medium Underset shank metal "Whisker" coupler and ASF Barber S-2 ACL 70 ton roller bearing trucks.

The #147 coupler features a metal coupler, metal "whisker" centering spring, insulated draft gear box, and lid. The #147 coupler may be mounted with supplied draft gear box, or with the manufacturer's coupler pockets. The #147 Whisker coupler comes two to a package and retails for $3.95.



The two-piece designed 560 ACL Barber S-2 70 ton roller bearing trucks feature 33-inch RP-25 wheels with free rolling insulated axles, brake pads, and fully equalized non-magnetic "HGC" trucks. The trucks retail for $8.95 per pair.

Kadee Quality Products Co., 673 Avenue C, White City, OR 97503-1078; 541-826-3883; 541-826-4013; mail@kadee.com; www.kadee.com

Ye Olde Huff N Puff Offers Eshleman Switch Point Links

MULTI — Ye Olde Huff N Puff has purchased Eshleman Turnout Switch Point Links. The company states that they now manufacture the original links, utilizing the same machinery, and tooling purchased from Eshleman.

The handcrafted turnout switch point link is a mechanical linkage to connect the operator, which may be manual, pneumatic, or electric, located under the bench work, to the turnout switch point's on the top of the model railroad trackwork system.

Ye Olde Huff N Puff states the switch point links are completely universal, are manufactured in the USA of durable brass, and will work with several operating devices for N through "No 1" track. Four holes in the top and bottom arms permit choosing the amount of throw.

One 1/8-inch hole through the bench work is all that is required, and may be located in any of six positions relative to the switch points. The top arm may be positioned on top or recessed underneath the ties. Springs are available for manual operation.

The link reportedly requires no soldering to install, it is easy to adjust, requires no maintenance, and is reusable when changes are made. The 3/4-inch maximum, 1-3/8-inch maximum, and 2-inches maximum switch point links retail for $3.25 each.

Ye Olde Huff N Puff, P.O. Box 1103, Lewistown, PA 17044; 717-248-8935; E-mail: info@yeoldehuffnpuff.com; www.yeoldehuffnpuff.com

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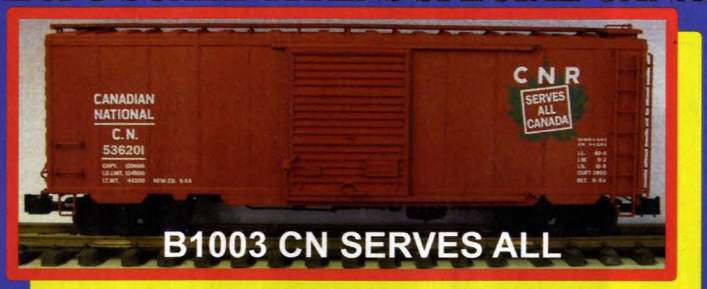

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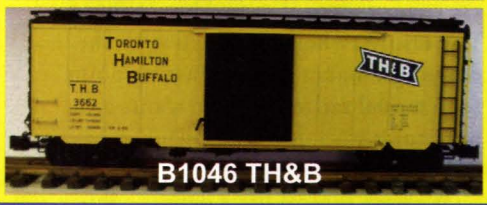

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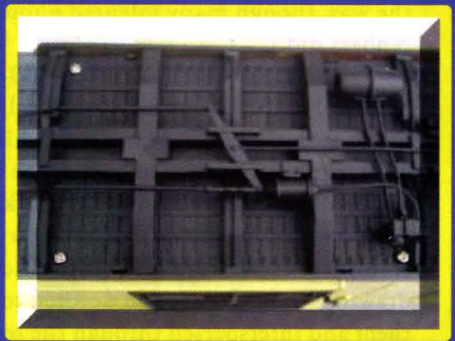

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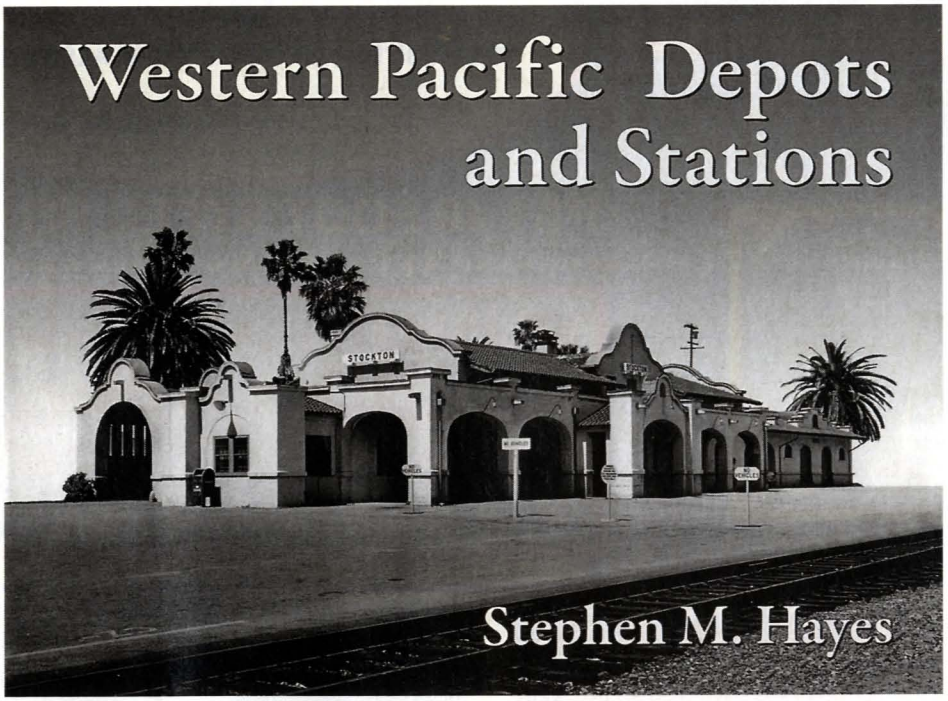
REVIEW Book

WP Depots Book is an Unexpected Treat



Review and Photos by John Sipple

***Western Pacific Depots and Stations*,**
Book only, MSRP: $60.00
CD of drawings, MSRP: $25.00
Book with CD, MSRP: $80.00

Hayes Publishing
P.O. Box 1083
Soulsbyville, CA 95372
209-536-1847
www.westernpacificdepotsandstations.com

NOT only do I love trains, I even love the track they run on and the places they go. Perhaps the most pronounced stops, waysides, and terminals in railroading are at depots and stations, so a book about them is nothing new. But this one is.

Western Pacific Railroad had a far-flung empire that reached from Salt Lake City, Utah to Oakland, California. Dodging south along the Great Salt Lake, it twisted its way through Nevada, across California's isolated but famous Keddie Wye, down to the state capitol at Sacramento, turning west at Stockton, and finally arriving at Oakland or San Jose. Western Pacific linked up with the Rio Grande Railroad in Salt Lake City, and the DRGW hooked up with the Burlington in Denver to make a three-railroad connection from Chicago to the San Francisco Bay area. However, the famous California Zephyr didn't stop at all the little depots and stations along the way, though many talented photographers did.

Wearing ISBN #978-1-60461-880-8, this 11-inch wide by 8-1/2-inch tall, hard cover product of Hayes Publishing was written and designed by Stephen M. Hayes and edited by Stanley G. Clark. *Western Pacific Depots and Stations* features over 50 original Western Pacific drawings in both a section devoted to them and interspersed through the rest of the book. There are over 400 vintage photos, and more than a fourth of them are in color. Often, the drawings and photos of the same structure are combined in one area to give the reader a stronger sense of the place. At other times, a drawing will be in one place while the photos will be in another.

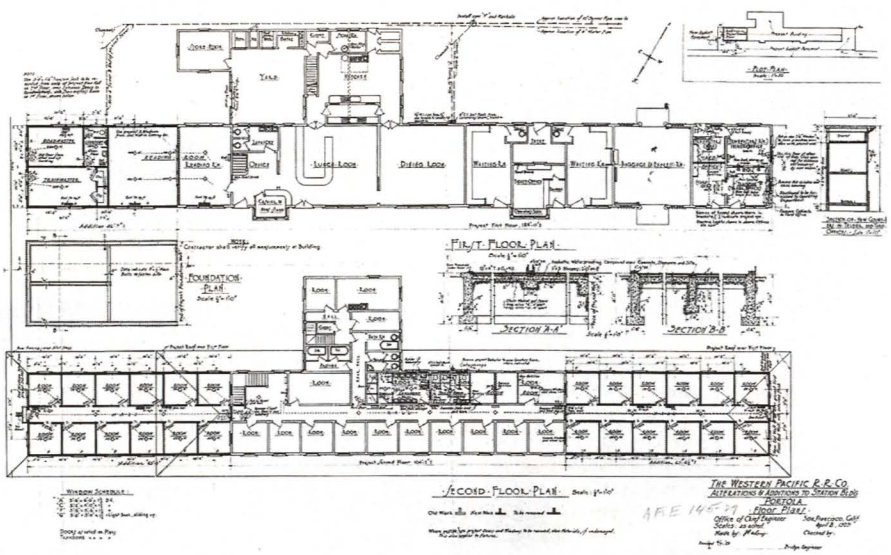
If you want to see official Western Pacific drawings and elevations at their original size, Hayes has also put them on disk as PDF (Portable Document Format) files that can be opened using Acrobat Reader, a free utility from Adobe Systems. For those who wish to actually scratch-build a model of one of these depots, this is an invaluable resource. Almost 100 of these original drawings are included on this disk.

The publishing of old photos is a harrowing business. Often, they were not exposed well in the first place and then were not stored properly, leading to degradation of the original image. The ideal in any black and white photo is to have a full tonal scale from pure black to pure white with detail extending in appropriate shades of gray into virtually everywhere. Ansel Adams was very good at this, and most of the rest of us fall short to some degree. Hayes has shown a wonderful hand at reproducing this collection of images. He has cleared the hazy grayness out of his reproduction process and gives each image a full tonal rendition. The end result is more pleasant to the eye and works better with the drawings.

Still, you can't get out of a negative what was never in it, and that is always the case when you start with a stack of old pictures. Some are in color, and it suffers even worse over time. Hayes makes sure the tonal qualities and colors are correct, even if somewhat subdued. The results, when combined with the drawings, makes a good starting point for a model railroader who wants a particular station on his layout to have a certain depot.

We have typical little depots combined with large edifices, depending upon the metropolis served. A station or depot was a good way to have a standing reminder to all who passed that WP wanted your business. Small towns only needed small reminders, apparently. Some were designed by the railroad's architects, often from standardized and numbered designs. We get to see these in the front of book, since these designs were adapted to several locations.

Some, such as the station in Reno, Nevada, came into being with their own designs and reasons. The Reno Station was actually built originally by the Nevada, California & Oregon Railway and then sold to WP along with 64 miles of track. This particular station still stands and is a Nevada State Historical location, #210. For thirty years, WP operated this as a passenger station until pas-



This is the drawing of the depot hotel in Portola, where a weary traveler could rent a small room and a bed that sat still all night long.

senger service was terminated in 1947. It's a very ornate brick and stone structure.

Most of WP's stations were wooden structures, but not all of them. San Jose had a very nice, little brick house with a tile roof that they used for a passenger depot from its construction in 1922 until service was ended in 1931, at which point it became the section foreman's house. San Jose did have a very large freight structure, however.

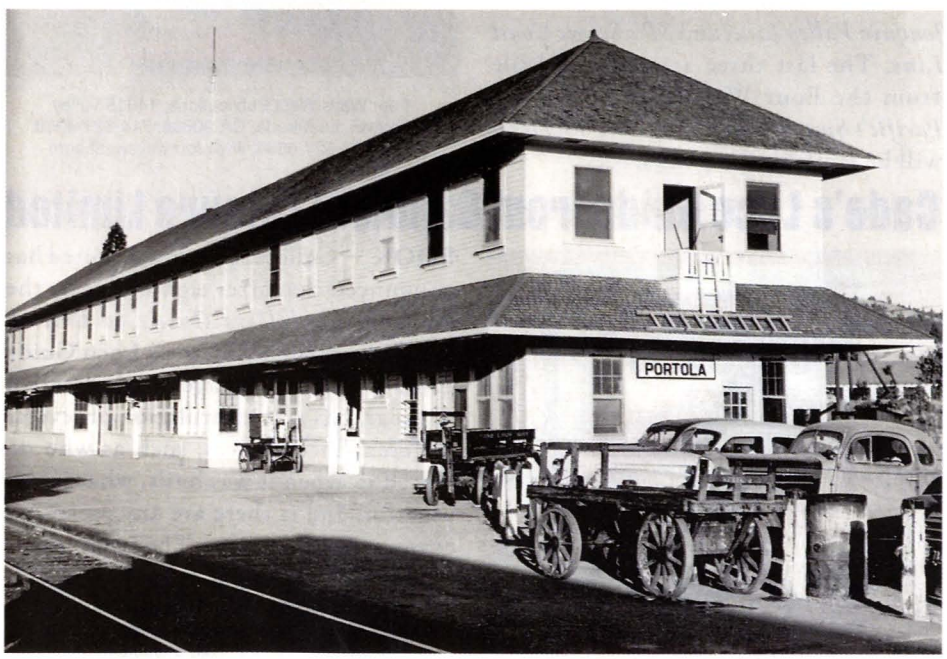
If you're looking for a consistent architectural theme, you might be disappointed. The railroad's depots were often modified, either at the time of construction or later on as needed. Several different eras are reflected, as are trends such as Mission style.

The Research

Hayes has confronted the singular issue of research in *Western Pacific Depots and Stations*. He unearths the difference between "station" and "depot" with a station being a place and a depot being a building. Between the fire that destroyed the railroad's home offices in San Francisco and the takeover by Union Pacific, a great deal of what would be useful in a project like this is either gone or inaccessible.

Some of this research has been rather like archeology, finding concrete slabs, which may be all that remains of many of the buildings. The rest of it is the work of a historian, poring over plans, papers, and photos, seeking clues and conclusions. He covers 67 different stations, and they are listed on a map that decorates the inside of the front cover and over onto the facing page. This same location in the back of the book has a map of WP in 1975. In short, there isn't a wasted bit of space in the book.

WP's passenger services began officially in 1910, though a couple of trains were run before that date. Many of the stations were just flag stops and wouldn't have depots for a while. Chapter 11 is devoted to passenger trains, by number. This is a tangled bit of research but much appreciated by those who would like to have a better understanding of how WP conducted their operations. For example, in some of the trains, passengers rode in the caboose!



The Portola drawing became this long and imposing structure. Check out the baggage carts and the automobiles!

The Book

The table of contents provides a listing of chapters and their page numbers, which also reveals the underlying structure of the book. Chapter 1 is The Depots and Stations, Chapter 2 is Depot and Station Plan Descriptions, and Chapter 3 is Construction Standards. Beginning with Chapter 4 and on through 9, the book traces WP's mainline run from San Francisco to Salt Lake City. Chapter 10 visits the Northern California Extensions and the Branches. While this isn't an exhaustive listing of all WP stations, it covers over sixty of them.

Final Thoughts

Western Pacific fans will want *Western Pacific Depots and Stations*. When combined with many of the fine rolling stock and locomotive books on the Feather River Route, it fills the perspective. Modelers will especially enjoy this tome and the CD that is available with it. However, you don't need to be either a modeler or a WP fan to appreciate this effort. There is an excellent understanding of the social issues that created and placed these structures along with the towns and peoples served. *Western Pacific Depots and Stations* is an invaluable snapshot of a place in time, available for you to enjoy over and over again.

Great Model Railroads, Vol. 61 Revisits the Erie Railroad

DVD — Allen Keller Productions has released *Great Model Railroads, Vol. 61.* This DVD display's Harold Werthwein's Erie Railroad with pictures, and some prototype sounds dubbed in to enhance the realistic effect of the model photography.

Mr. Werthwein has one of the largest HO-scale layouts in the country at 85 by 30 feet. He has added a new coal route, the Wyoming Division with three coal branches, above the original layout that was documented in Vol. 18 of the series. This show follows the line from Port Jervis, New York, to Lackawanna, where it interchanges with the Erie's Delaware Division.

Harold will show you his coal mines, how to use prototype paperwork, block trains for operation and operate less than carload freights. The Wyoming Division is a Great Model Railroad because Harold has captured the feel of the prototype by using official railroad paperwork and by getting help from former railway executives.

The DVD retails for $45.00.

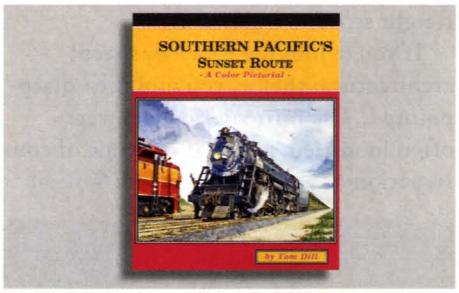
Allen Keller Productions, 7410 Lebanon Church Rd., Talbott, TN 37877-8940; 423 586-7928; Fax: 423 581-6582; E-mail: allenkeller@earthlink.net; www.allenkeller.com

Two Erie GP-7s lead a string of empty hoppers over the Roaring Brook bridge on the way up the Jessup coal branch. The scene is from the video of Harold Werthein's Wyoming Division.

Southern Pacific's Sunset Route from Four Ways West

BOOK — Four Ways West has released a new Southern Pacific book from Tom Dill. *Southern Pacific's Sunset Route – A Color Pictorial* has more than 260 color photos with captions in 128 pages. It is available now.

The new hardbound book covers Southern Pacific's lines from Los Angeles southeast to El Paso, then the Golden State Route beyond El Paso to Tucumcari, New Mexico. This is the last book in Dill's series covering SP's routes. His other books in the series are: *SP's Colorful Shasta Route*, which is now out of print, *SP's Historic Overland Route*, *SP's San Joaquin Valley Line*, and *SP's Scenic Coast Line*. The last three are still available from the Four Ways West. *Southern Pacific's Sunset Route – A Color Pictorial* will be available for $59.95.



Four Ways West Publications, 14618 Valley View Ave., La Mirada, CA 90638; 714-521-4259; Fax: 714-521-5664; www.fourwayswest.com

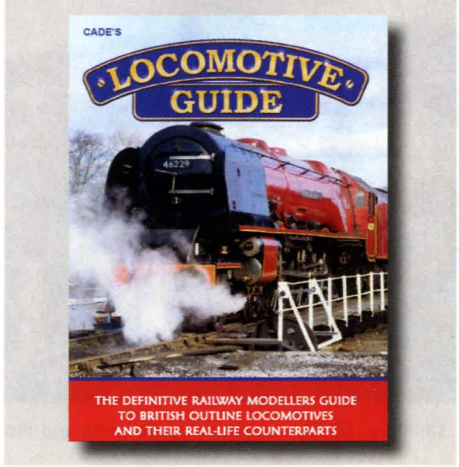
Underground Railway Produces Annual Model Railroading Industry Directory

CATALOG — Underground Railway Press has released their annual One-Source Scale Model Railroad Industry Directory for 2009. The twenty-second anniversary edition lists over 1,000 active manufacturers and publishers in N, HO, S, O, and large scales, both standard and narrow gauges. The directory covers only Canadian and U.S. companies.

Each individual listing contains the name of the company, U.S.P.S. address, catalog requirements, and primary product produced. It is not a "Buyers Guide," and is laser printed, with no photos, color, or graphics. The directory (URP-500) retails for $9.95.

Underground Railway Press, P.O. Box 814MW, Brevard, NC 28712-0814

Cade's Loco Guide from Gallafent Leisure Limited



BOOK — Gallafent Leisure Limited has announced that after eighteen years the *Railway Modellers Guide to British Locomotives* is back. Cade's Loco Guide contains over 340 pages with detailed photographs and information of several different locomotives, such as who designed it, when it was built, what it was used for, and if there are any preserved examples. It is in color. The book retails for £24.95 (approximately $37.00 US).

Gallafent Leisure Limited, Marwain House, Clarke Rd., Mount Farm, Milton Keynes MK1 1LG; 01908 643022; Fax: 01908 648132; E-mail: enquiries@cadeslocomotiveguide.co.uk; www.cadeslocomotiveguice.co.uk

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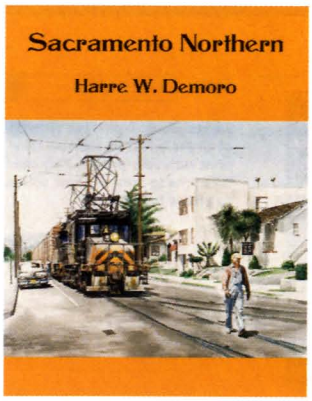
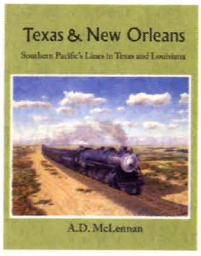
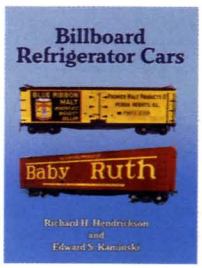


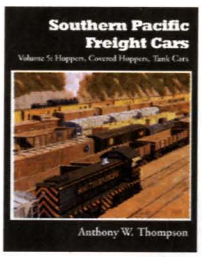
***Sacramento Northern*, Harre W. Demoro**
The Sacramento Northern, one of America's greatest interurbans, combined the Northern Electric and Oakland, Antioch & Eastern lines into a single, 185-mile route between San Francisco and Chico, California. In later years it was owned by the Western Pacific, for whom it was an important feeder. This masterful history by traction and rail authority Harre Demoro superbly documents the history, operations, and essential character of this railroad, including its freight services, in a fine new book.
354 pages, 467 photos, 19 maps and drawings, rosters, bibliography, index. **Price: $70**



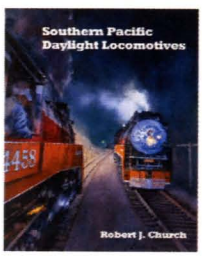
***Texas & New Orleans*, A.D. McLennan**
This long-needed history describes Southern Pacific's lines in Texas and Louisiana, from the 1850s to 1961, from El Paso to New Orleans, and many branches.
386 pages, 327 photos, 39 maps and drawings, bibliography, index. **Price: $70**



***Billboard Refrigerator Cars*, Richard H. Hendrickson, Edward S. Kaminski**
Long a subject of great interest but often misunderstood, among historians, railfans and modelers, the billboard era from the 1920s to the 1950s, deserves this full examination by the authors, expert freight car historians both.
224 pages, 440 photos, bibliography, index. **Price: $60**



***Southern Pacific Freight Cars*, Volume 5, Anthony W. Thompson**
This volume completes a definitive series on the freight cars of this important railroad, covering gondolas and stock cars (Vol. 1), cabooses (Vol. 2), automobile and flat cars (Vol. 3), box cars (Vol. 4), and now presenting hoppers, covered hoppers and tank cars.
Volume 5: 448 pages, 578 photos (77 in color), 110 drawings, bibliography, index. **Price: $70**



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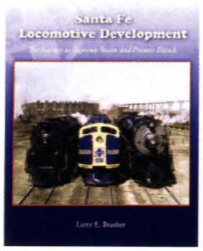

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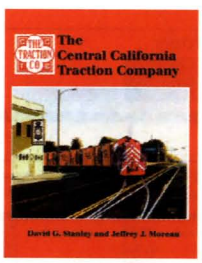

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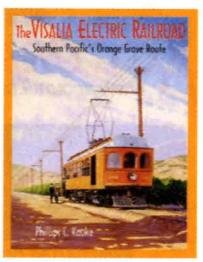

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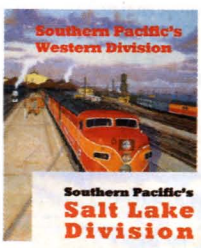

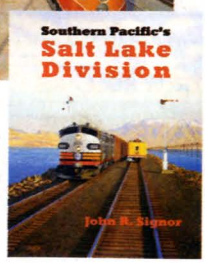

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Noted SP historian John Signor delivers the history of two of SP's most complex and scenic divisions, routes of many famous name trains, along with many details of operations.
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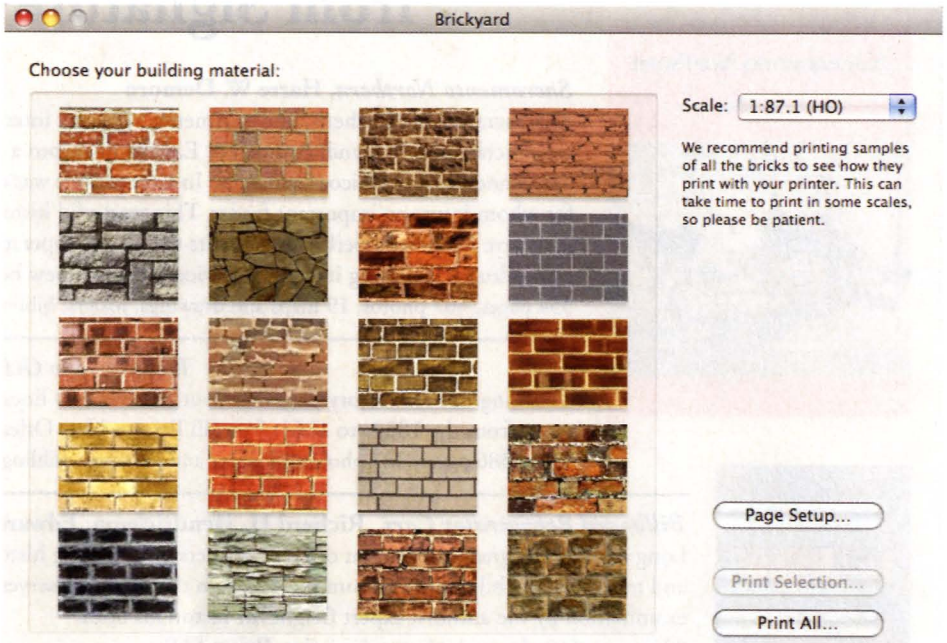
Evan's Brickyard Software Now Available for Macintosh

SOFTWARE — Evan Designs has released a Mac version of their Brickyard Software. Users of Brickyard choose a modeling scale from 1:12 to 1:220 then are able to print full sheets of any of 13 Brick patterns and 7 Stone patterns in their chosen scale. The stone patterns include random stone and cut stone, and weathered and newer brick patterns. There is also a cinder block.

For users who do not have a Mac, there is a Windows 98 through Vista version of the Brickyard program available. System Requirements: Mac 10.3 or newer, 20MB hard disk space. Windows 98 through Vista, 20MB hard disc space. Brickyard is offered for $15.00.

Evan Designs, P.O. Box 2044, Broomfield, CO 80038; 303-410-1118; E-mail: traindetail@gmail.com; www.modeltrainsoftware.com


Brickyard
Choose your building material:
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We recommend printing samples of all the bricks to see how they print with your printer. This can take time to print in some scales, so please be patient.
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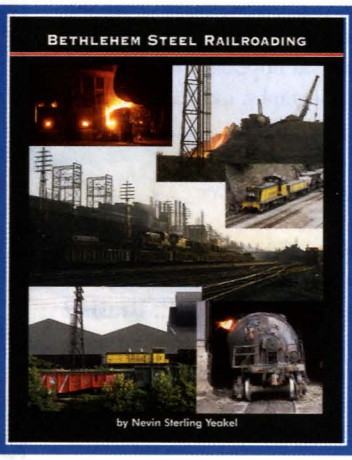
Evans Designs Brickyard Software allows modelers to choose stone and brickyard patterns, and print to scale for scratch building projects. The software is now available for Mac as well as Windows users.

The Railroad Press



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Features 70 photos (37 color and 33 b/w). Many of these are seldom seen views taken inside the plant. PB&NE, LV, RDG, D&H, CR, BSCO Narrow Gauge and other private Bethlehem Steel equipment are shown, including hot metal cars, cinder pots and heavy-duty flatcars with loads. 8 maps, plus charts listing tracks, crew assignments and interchanges.

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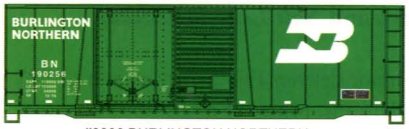

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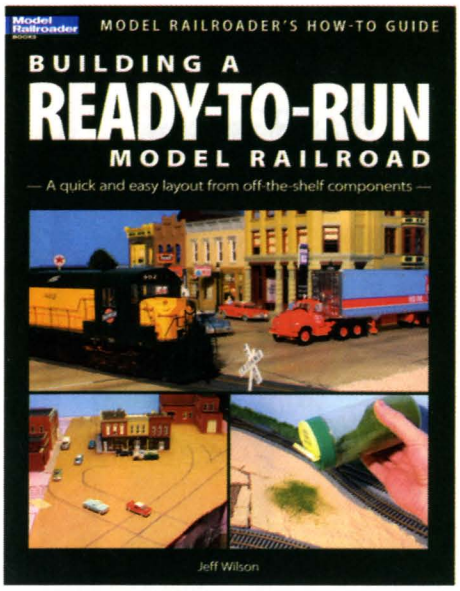
Building A Ready-to-Run Model Railroad



BOOK — Kalmbach Publishing Co. has released *Building A Ready-to-Run Model Railroad* by Jeff Wilson. The book provides hobbyists with instructions for adding structures, scenery, and details to the featured 4-foot by 12-foot layout. It shows how to build simple benchwork and design a track plan; create scenery with grass, trees, and more; assemble structure kits; add roads, signs, and vehicles; and select trains.

Building A Ready-to-Run Model Railroad (ISBN 978-0-89024-740-2) has more than two hundred photos and diagrams, and retails for $19.95.

Kalmbach Publishing Co., P.O. Box 1612, Waukesha, WI 53187-1612; 800-533-6644; Fax: 262-798-6592; www.kalmbach.com

May 1925 Equipment Register from Westerfield

DVD — Westerfield has released the May 1925 Equipment Register on disk, which is the completion of a series of published ORERs for approximately every fifth year from 1885 to 1965. The 1925 ORER was issued at the height of railroading's power, and contains more pages than any issue until 1970. It contains over a thousand pages, and several maps. The disk retails for $20.00.

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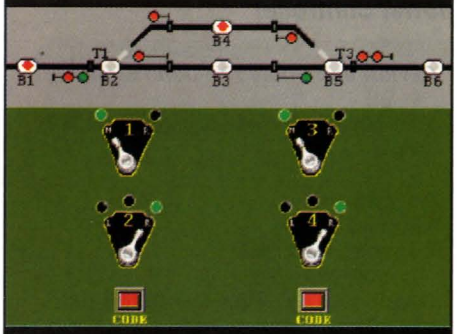

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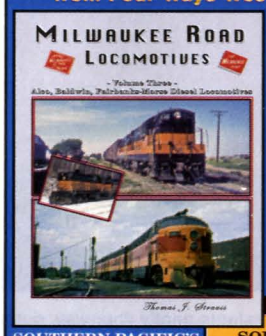
Two New Books for 2009 from Four Ways West Publications



Coming Soon!
This is the third volume of a set which features Milwaukee Road Locomotives in-depth. There are many photographs, both black & white and color, featuring diesel locomotives built by Alco, Baldwin, Fairbanks-Morse. This book is written by a retired Milwaukee Road engineer who worked very closely with all of these locomotive types.
by Thomas F. Strauss
$59.95

SOUTHERN PACIFIC'S SUNSET ROUTE
- A Color Pictorial -
Featuring SP's Pacific Lines' Sunset and Golden State Routes through the picturesque and hostile desert southeast from LA to El Paso and Tucumcari, NM. The era featured is the last of steam and early diesel. Written by a retired SP engineer and featuring photos by many famous photographers.
by Tom Dill
$59.95

A few Color Pictorials still available are: C&O Vols. 1 & 2, NYC Vols 1-4, PRR 1-5, IC Vols. 1 & 2, KCS, NH 1-3, NP 1, D&RGW 1, Pool Power West, SF in the Lone Star State, SP's San Joaquin Valley Line, SP's Overland Route, SP's Coast Line, Rock Island Vols, 2 & 3, Texas & New Orleans, Western Maryland 1, WP 1 & 2, Wisconsin Central 1 & 2.

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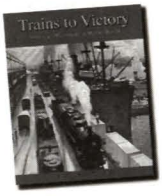
Trains to Victory
America s Railroads in World War II



Trains to Victory tells the dramatic story of the years 1941-1945 when U.S. railroads, using fewer cars and locomotives than in WWI, moved more tonnage and more passengers than ever before. The book discusses the implications of the war on the railroads, embarkation of troops and materiels, how the Military Railway Service joined the fight and what was happening on U.S railroads during the war.

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Price: $59.95 (add $6.00 shipping). Deluxe slipcase cover limited edition with gold foil imprint: $74.95 (add $6.50 shipping). ***Illinois residents add 9.5% sales tax***

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REVIEW All Scales

More Power for All Scales!

Bridgewerks offers new All-Scale DC power controller

Review and Photos by John Sipple

Mini-Mag 3-S power controller, MSRP: $99.95

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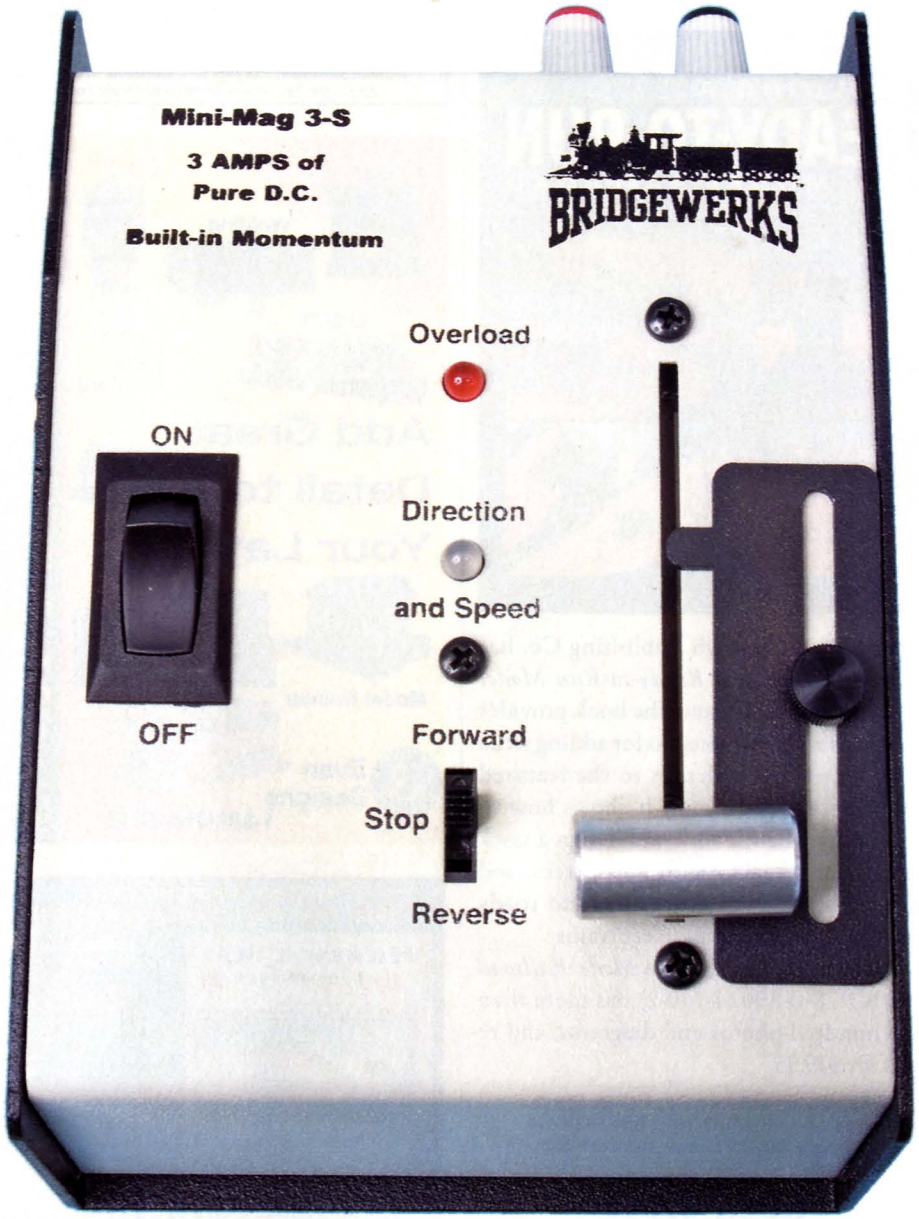


The top face slants gently your way, putting all the necessary controls right where you can manage them. To the right of the throttle slider is the max throttle limiter plate and the knurled knob that lets you set it where you wish.

YOU may not have heard of Bridgewerks, especially if you've stayed around the smaller "table" scales. This company started off making bridges for Large Scale garden railroading but sold that portion of its business to H&R Trains in Florida and focused on its line of power supplies and controllers. Their goal was to build power products with uncompromising quality for garden railroading.

And they've succeeded. Using solid, steel cases as a starting point, they've gone for the highest quality components and often use point-to-point interior wiring, all of this to create unprecedented durability. Plastic cases and stamped, thin metal doesn't give a power supply the sort of rugged reliability an outdoor model railroader might want.

Most of us who have worked out of doors have learned to keep our power systems out of the weather, but that still doesn't keep them from getting roughed up. The high amperage demands of external garden use joins with physical damage, forcing you to replace your supply components from time to time. Nothing seems to last — except Bridgewerks.

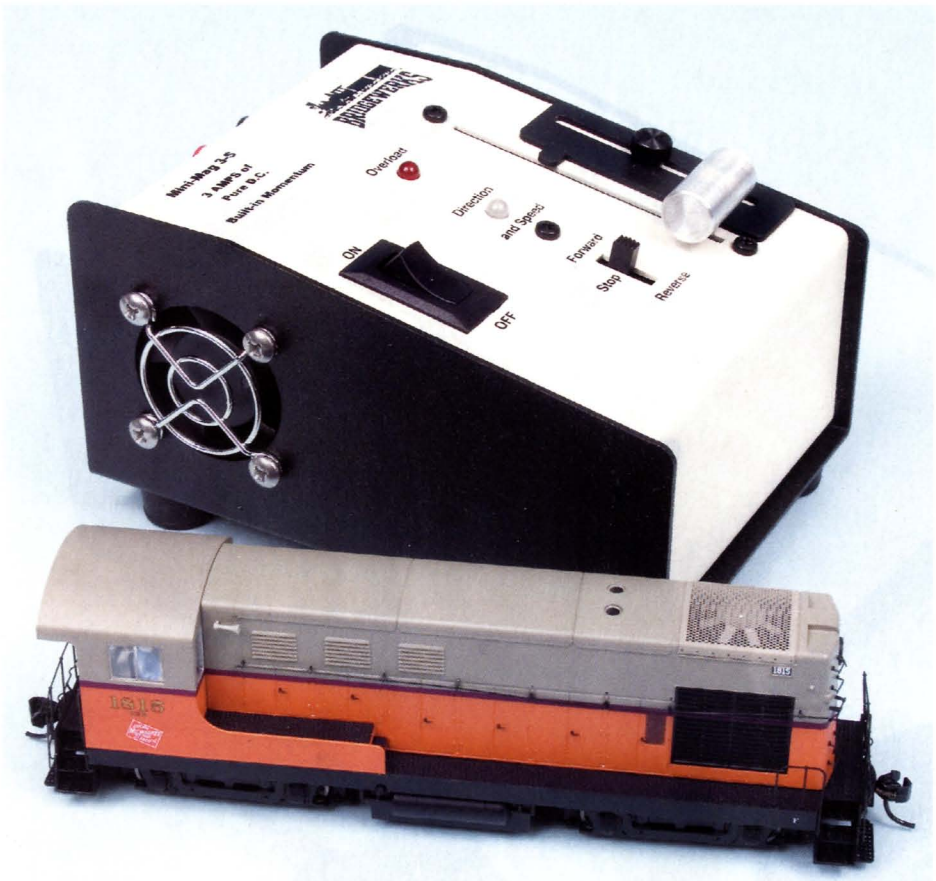
Reaching out to smaller scales

Producing a power controller for your garden system has always been a Bridgewerks process, but they have recently added a new power controller to their line: the Mini-Mag 3-S. Unlike its big brothers that can unleash 25 amps at about 25 volts, the Mini-Mag is restricted to 3 amps and a top voltage of around 24 volts DC.

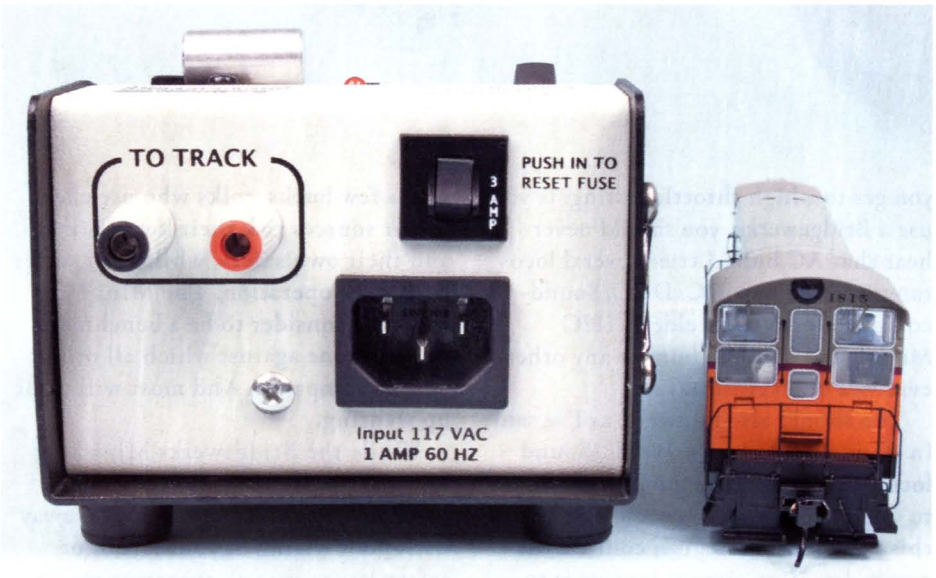
Of course, the top voltage for Z scale is 8 volts, N is 10 volts, and HO is 12 volts, for strictly Analog DC operations. HO scale locos with built in DCC/DC Sound operation can tolerate upwards of 16 volts. With the usual DC power pack, you'd be lucky if you got it much beyond 14 volts, but that would still be too much for our smaller neighbors in Z or N.

Bridgewerks has a solution. It offers a sliding maximum voltage stop that is adjusted with a knurled knob. I used an inexpensive Volt/Ohm Meter to set my top voltage and then enjoyed the ability to take it to full throttle and not exceed my scale limitation.

The three amp output is quite reasonable. Compared to train set throttle packs and low-priced industry starter supplies, a 3 amp maximum provides plenty of power without offering undue risk. If you have a locomotive short across the rails, the power pack's full amperage will be applied



I called on Walthers' H10-44 HO-scale locomotive to pose as a scale reference, showing that the MiniMag isn't all that big. The entire case is made of steel with a solid coat of paint to protect it.



Our Fairbanks-Morse switchers cozies up to the power station. It has a DC/DCC/Sound decoder that responds very nicely with the clean power from the "To Track" terminals on the back.

at the supplied voltage and amperage, and that could be fatal to your engine. Much under three amps and you'll have a hard time running a large scale DC locomotive, but much over 3 amps and you're risking your HO or smaller pullers. On the backplane is a 3-amp breaker with a push-button reset. Of course, if you want to protect against lesser shorts, you can always put fuses or breakers in the line.

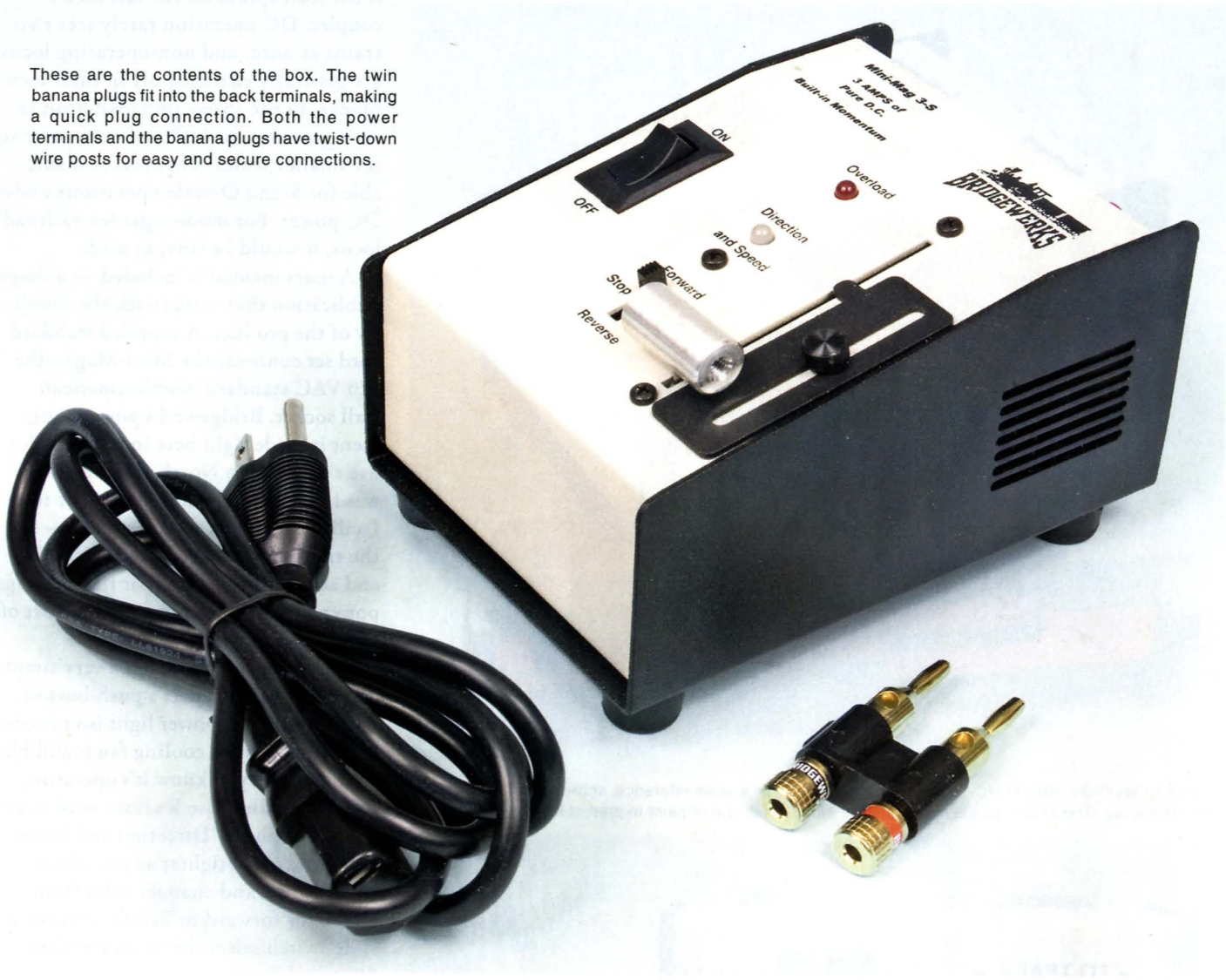
Most HO locomotives draw less than an amp each. Putting three 1-amp locos on the front of a train doesn't mean they'll draw three amps. More likely, the train will draw one to one-and-a-half amps because the locos share the load. It will only hit higher amperage if the load spikes on the last loco's coupler. DC operation rarely sees two trains at once, and non-operating locos are generally switched off in their own blocks, so the three-amp load limit is very generous for HO and even more so for smaller scales. This makes it suitable for S-and O-scale operations under DC power. For modest garden railroad locos, it would be fine, as well.

A users manual is included — a simple publication that works with the simplicity of the product. A supplied standard cord set connects the Mini-Mag to the 120 VAC standard North American wall socket. Bridgewerks power equipment is made right here in the USA for use right here in North America, so it was instantly right at home in our test facility. It has one set of outputs — to the tracks! If you need to supply lights and accessories with AC or fixed voltage power, you will need to use some sort of separate supply for that.

The slope front case has a very simple control panel. There is a push-button on-off switch. A power light isn't needed because the unit's cooling fan is audible enough to let you know it's operating. The front panel also features a red overload LED plus a "Direction and Speed" LED that gets brighter as you advance the throttle, and changes color from Green for forward to Red for reverse. A slide switch selects between Forward, Stop, and Reverse.

The throttle is a slider that is very smooth and is operated by a large T-knob. Aside from the maximum voltage detent, I felt no restriction in its movement, though there is a resistance to movement from some sort of damping mechanism that prevents one from moving it in a rash manner. There is a graduated acceleration and deceleration that serves as a basic momentum, though an emergency pull to zero throttle bypasses it.

If I have a complaint at all about this power controller, it is with the cooling fan. This is a noisy little guy that quiets down some when there's a load on it. I haven't seen the research information Bridgewerks has developed, so I don't know how necessary this fan might be, but I'm betting it could be made quieter. However, if this noise is part of keeping the innards young and healthy, then I won't say another word against it.



These are the contents of the box. The twin banana plugs fit into the back terminals, making a quick plug connection. Both the power terminals and the banana plugs have twist-down wire posts for easy and secure connections.

Pure Juice

It should be noted right here that Bridgewerks is all about pure DC power. If you use the right components, there should be no problem filtering out all ripple and AC influences into a DC current. Unfortunately, the less expensive DC power packs don't use top quality components and some power packs intentionally leak AC power into the supply, especially at low voltages. Supposedly, this will help reluctant DC locomotives get started, but it also helps ruin the motor in every locomotive that has to put up with this. It's a little like getting your car going at a stop sign by taking a jackhammer to your rear bumper.

While it's easy to see dirty AC power in your DC supply if you use an expensive oscilloscope, you can often hear it at starting speeds. A basic DC locomotive will hum at low speeds, usually a 60 cycle buzz that seems to go away when you get to a high throttle setting. If you use a Bridgewerks, you should never hear that AC hum; I tried several locos ranging from new DC/DCC/Sound-equipped locos to an elderly IHC Mogul, and I had no hum or any other evidence of an AC leak.

You should also be aware, as I've said in many reviews of DC/DCC/Sound locos, that you need a good, pure supply to operate your DC-powered side of this. The leaking AC can confuse the power detection circuit, leading it to think it's looking at DCC, which is a form of AC current. If you are having problems with your decoders detecting DC power, it may be due to the AC that's mixed in with it.

Finishing with safety

Most of all, I've been very worried and disappointed by some of the low-end DC power supplies used by model railroaders. In an attempt to save a few bucks, folks who use cheap power sources risk their locomotives and their own safety, while they suffer with poor operation. The Mini-Mag is what I consider to be a benchmark product, one against which all other will be compared. And most will come up wanting.

While the Bridgewerks Mini-Mag 3-S will resolve the quality issues in your power supply, it will not do away with poor wiring in your layout or safety issues such as operating trains while your shoes are in wet grass. The included banana plug set will make it easy to bring the Mini-Mag inside, rather than leave it out in the weather. I will say the Mini-Mag will add a measure of safety that's the result of better design and construction. It may cost more than other basic DC power controllers, but this is an enduring investment for the dedicated model railroader.

New Toy Train Track Star track cleaning car

HO — Aztec Manufacturing has released a new Toy Train Track Star track-cleaning car. It was engineered for ease of use and minimal maintenance.

The Toy Train Track Star has a hard black anodized aluminum chassis, which holds a free rolling roller at an angle to the track. A bar magnet is attached to the chassis housed in a Bachmann gondola. The Cratex roller is made of a rubberized abrasive material, which scrubs the dirt off of

tracks, and has a magnet to pick up loose objects. The car will work great with toy train layouts such as Thomas the Tank, or any other HO-scale layout. The Toy Train Track Star (#TS1166) retails for $59.95 each. Cratex replacement rollers are available for $19.95 each.

Aztec Manufacturing Co., 2701 Conestoga Dr Ste 113, Carson City, NV 89706-0483; 775-883-3327; Fax: 775-883-3357; E-mail: aztecmfg@usa.net; www.aztectrains.com

Atlas Introduces Master Track Cleaning Car

Atlas is offering a new track cleaner for HO-scale layouts.

HO — Atlas Model Railroad Co. has released a new HO-scale track-cleaning car in four different paint schemes — Maintenance of Way gray, MOW yellow, MOW orange, and yellow with an Atlas logo. This new model is licensed from Dapol in the United Kingdom. The Atlas HO Master Track Cleaning Car retails for $109.94.

According to Atlas, each HO Master Track Cleaning Car includes: abrasive heads, polishing heads, vacuum fan, foam pads for liquid cleaning, and track brushes. Most of these heads can be removed by hand and are operated by the on-board motor. The vacuum head requires usage of the included tool for removal. The track brushes are attached by a screw on a visible mount; cleaning fluid can be added by removing the black tank cover on the top of the car and inserting a small amount.

Atlas states the car has wet-or-dry cleaning capabilities as well as a vacuum function. To use any of the functions, the modeler need simply attach the appropriate head or fan, make sure that the switch is in the 'OFF' position before placing on the layout, and then couple it to the locomotive of choice to move the car around the track. (The motor doesn't allow for movement power.) Turn the switch to the 'ON' position and slowly turn up the power to the rails via the transformer. As power is supplied to the car and locomotive, the fan/head will start to spin and the locomotive will pull it around the track. To empty any dust from vacuuming, simply remove the top cover and turn the entire car upside-down.

There is a third setting on the track cleaning car, noted as "CL-POWER," which will distribute extra power to the cleaning heads to help remove any extremely dirty areas that normal cleaning won't remove entirely. This setting should only be used briefly to prevent excessive wear to the motor (and track if the abrasive head is applied).

The Atlas HO Track Cleaning Car is fitted with an onboard 8-pin PCB, allowing it to run on DCC-powered layouts after a decoder has been installed. Atlas warns the car should not be run on a DCC-wired layout before installing a proper decoder as the unit may be damaged, voiding the warranty.

Atlas, 378 Florence Ave, Hillside, NJ 07205-1102; 908-687-0880; Fax: 908-687-8857; www.atlasrr.com

New DCC Sets from Lenz

DCC — Lenz is releasing the following sets: Set-100 (includes an LH100 and an LZV100); Set-90 (with an LH 90 and an LZV100); Set 100/10 (includes an LH00, an LZV100, and an LV102); Set/LI (with Loco Ce includes LZV100, an Ll101, and the Loco Ce software package). All sets are available with manuals, and a two-for-one decoder offer.

Set-100 features a push-button control while Set-90 uses a rotary-style throttle. Set-100/10 provides 10 amps for larger scales; Set/LI with Loco CE for WiFi offers wireless operation. All support thirty one XpressNet handhelds, four digit addressing, all forms of programming, including the advanced one-step address programming and operations mode programming, layout control feedback, advanced consisting, control of 256 locomotives and 999 turnouts, and fourteen DCC functions (F1-F12, plus F0 forward, and F0 reverse).

Set 100 retails for $349.00, set-90 retails for $290.00, set-100/10 retails for $499.95, and S3.et/LI retails for $299.95. Please see your local Lenz reseller or visit Lenz online for additional information on each set.

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Project DCC - Integrating Operation and Automation
Part 10A, Manual Computer Control using Panel Pro and STP

— By Phil Scandura

Over the previous two months we presented an overview of layout automation and took a brief look at each of the software packages used on Project DCC. This month (and next) we'll dive deeper into manual control and how each of the software packages provides that capability.

[Part 10 was originally written as one installment; however, due to its large size it was necessary to divide it up into two parts. This month (Part 10A) we'll cover Panel Pro and STP; next month (Part10B) we'll cover Layout Commander and Train Controller.]

As a quick refresher, our notion of manual vs. automated control is fairly straightforward. Manual control gives you the ability to command turnouts to change position, control the speed and direction of trains using virtual throttles and in some cases change signal aspects. Using a graphical interface on the computer you perform these tasks in much the same way as when using the handheld DCC throttle. Automated control, on the other hand, consists of defining the origin and destination for a train, its desired route, and associated speed limits along the route. Upon handing control over to the computer it then pilots the train along the route, performing conflict avoidance to route around other trains.

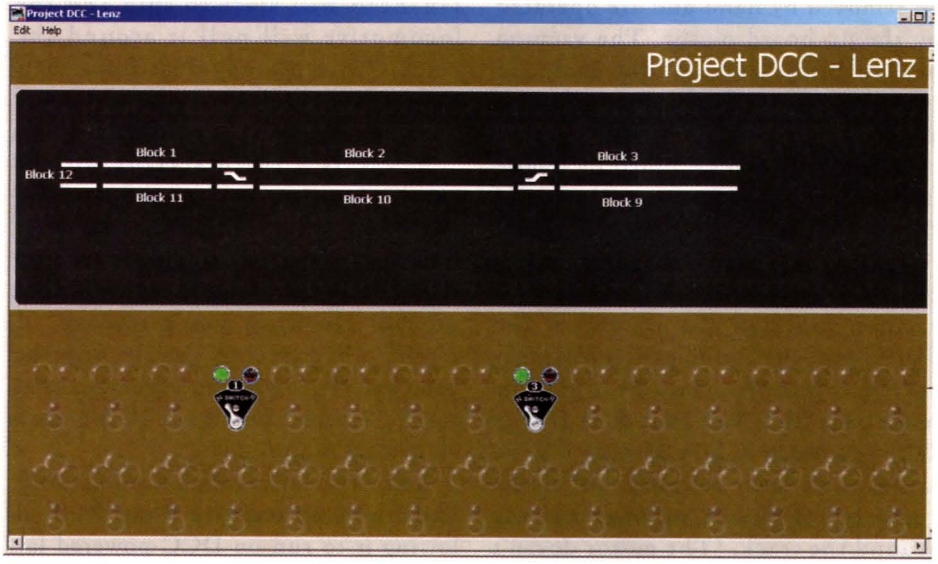

Figure 1 - Creating the layout diagram in Panel Pro consists of placing pre-defined elements on a control panel image. Shown here is the early stage of the panel representing the left leg of the Lenz layout. Defined so far are the track elements and crossover control levers.

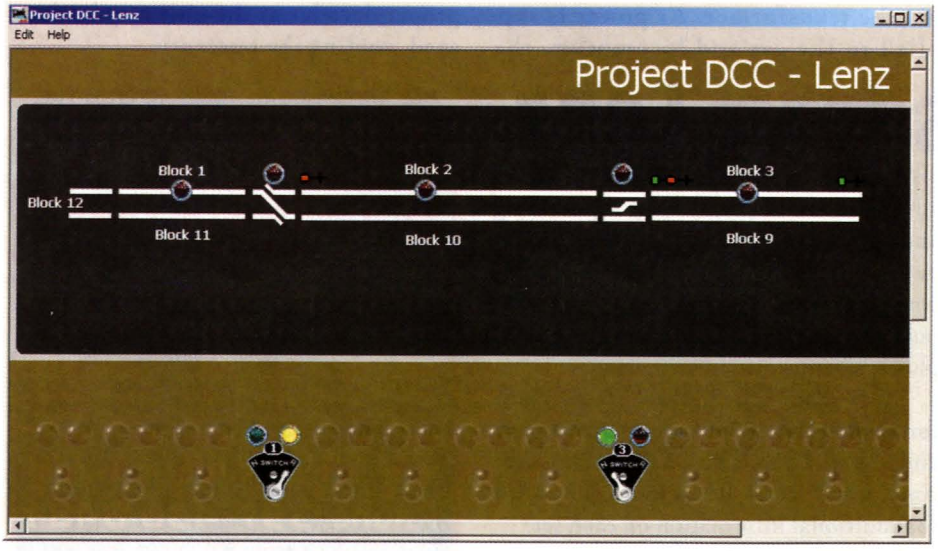

Figure 2 - Here we see the completed panel that includes block occupancy lights and signal indicators. In total, over 100 drawing elements (track segments, lights, levers, etc.) make up this otherwise simple looking panel.

Panel Pro

As noted last month, **Panel Pro** from JMRI represents a Centralized Traffic Control (CTC) dispatcher paradigm. Using Panel Pro's built-in track editor, you create a CTC panel representing your layout, including block occupancy indicators, turnout controls, and signal controls. Once defined, you operate the layout in much the same way a dispatcher would by setting turnouts, routes, etc.

Layout Diagram Creation

Creating the layout diagram consists of placing "elements" on a blank control panel. To give the impression of a realistic CTC panel you can choose a background image, in this case, of an actual machine. A handful of panel images are provided with Panel Pro, or you can follow instructions on the web site to create your own image. Shown in **Figure 1** is the standard panel we chose to represent the left leg of the Lenz layout. On it are track elements representing several pieces of straight track and two crossovers. Each element must be chosen from a library of available images, individually placed on the panel and manually aligned (Panel Pro does not provide auto-align or snap-to features). Once you've placed an element you can check the "fix" checkbox to prevent accidentally moving them.

Below the track diagram are control levers for each crossover. Creating each control lever is a multi-step process; first you select and place the switch plate, next you add the lever, then you add the two indicator lights. Except for the switch plate, each item has four possible states and associated images for each. The states are closed, thrown, inconsistent, and unknown. So for this control you must select

thirteen images (1 plate, 4 levers, 4 left lights, and 4 right lights) and place four of them (plate, lever, left light, and right light) on the panel. In a similar manner, you select and place the images representing block occupancy lights and signal indicators (see **Figure 2**). In total, there are over 100 elements making up this otherwise simple looking panel. Creating the layout diagram is a somewhat tedious process, but you get used to it eventually. One feature that would make the process go a bit smoother is an UNDO command; unfortunately Panel Pro does not provide one.

In the process of selecting and placing each element Panel Pro opens up several windows, for example, the main program window, the error message window, the panel you are editing, the editor control, the element selector, etc. Your desktop quickly becomes overwhelmed, as shown in **Figure 3**. Of course you don't need every window visible simultaneously, you can minimize some of them, but you still need to switch between them to get the job done.

Configuring Panel Pro

As you place elements on your panel some will be "active" elements — those that actually "do something" such as a turnout or indicator light. For these to operate properly you must configure them, that is, associate the element on the computer screen with the physical item on the DCC layout. Turnouts, for example, must be associated with their associated DCC control address; block occupancy indicators with their sensor address, and so on. This is done by populating various tables that Panel Pro uses to translate between track elements on the panel and physical DCC devices. Panel Pro populates these tables automatically based on DCC messages generated by the connected DCC system. Depending upon your brand of DCC system, Panel Pro uses a specific naming convention for each turnout, sensor, etc. This is explained on the web site, although, it took some browsing to find it the first time.

Panel Pro's auto-population feature is useful, but also troublesome. I discovered (the hard way) that it is necessary to be connected to the layout when creating/editing my panel. On one occasion I was working at my desk (away from the layout) and opened up Panel Pro. It gave me a warning that I wasn't connected to the layout, but I continued to do some editing anyway. Some time later when I reopened my saved panel file I discovered all of the turnouts and block occupancy symbols had disappeared from the drawing, and the underlying tables were blank. Apparently the software attempted to auto-populate the existing tables when the layout was disconnected and in doing so wiped them clean. Needless to say I was not very happy when I had to redraw my panel.

As I mentioned last month, some software packages assume a specific wiring configuration of the layout. In the case of Panel Pro it insisted my turnouts were wired backwards (that

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is, the panel showed closed when they were actually thrown and visa versa), despite the fact they worked correctly when operated from the DCC hand-held throttle. The configuration table for the turnouts included an "inverted" checkbox that presumably would allow me to overcome this by reversing their state in the software (that is, closed is open and open is closed), but it was grayed out and could not be selected. Because of this I was forced to reverse the wires on my turnout controller while evaluating Panel Pro (later I changed them back).

Regarding the signal elements on the panel, you may be wondering how they change color since the Lenz BM3 controls the real signals directly and doesn't provide their status on the DCC network. This was accomplished by defining "virtual" signals in Panel Pro and controlling the aspects based on the block occupancy reported by the layout via the Lenz LR101 feedback encoder. In addition, the state of the crossover was used to control the signal aspects. For example, if the crossover was thrown to the diverging route, the signal associated with the mainline route displayed red on the panel.

Panel Pro also provides a logic equation editor called "Logix" that allows you to define more complex relationships. In the case of the turnouts, Logix was used to prevent a turnout from being thrown when a train occupied the block containing the turnout. This prevents the dispatcher from throwing a turnout "under a train" and causing a derailment. You can also define routes that align a group of turnouts in a particular way to route a train from one area of the layout to another.

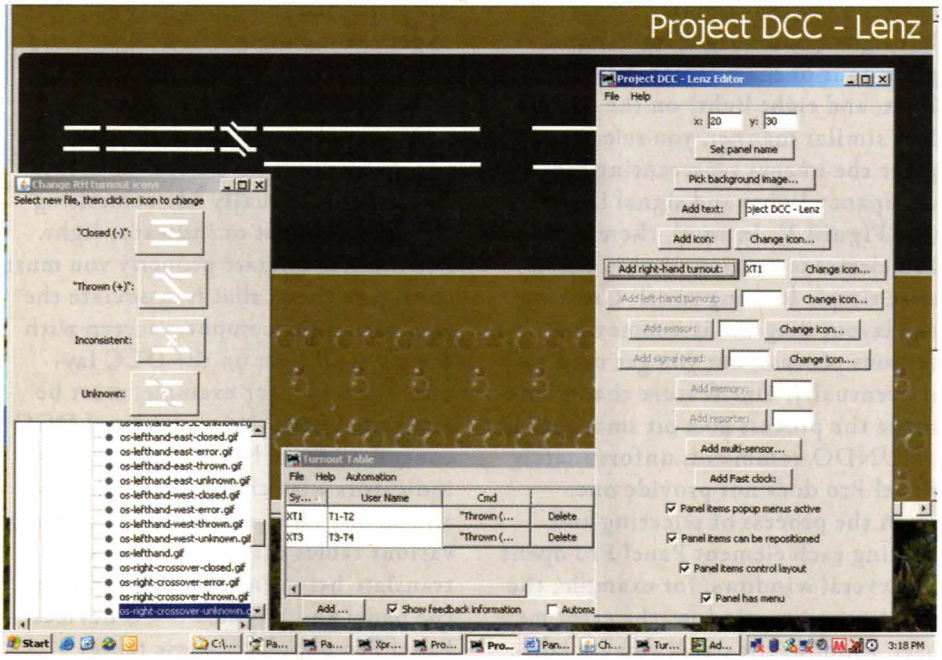

Figure 3 - Windows, windows everywhere! In the process of creating and configuring your panel diagram, Panel Pro opens up several windows. While you don't need every window visible simultaneously and can minimize some, you'll find yourself constantly switching between them to get the job done.

Layout Operation

Panel Pro operation is very simple; as the train travels the layout, the block occupancy lights reflect occupied blocks. If the dispatcher wants to throw a turnout, simply click on the associated turnout lever. If routes are

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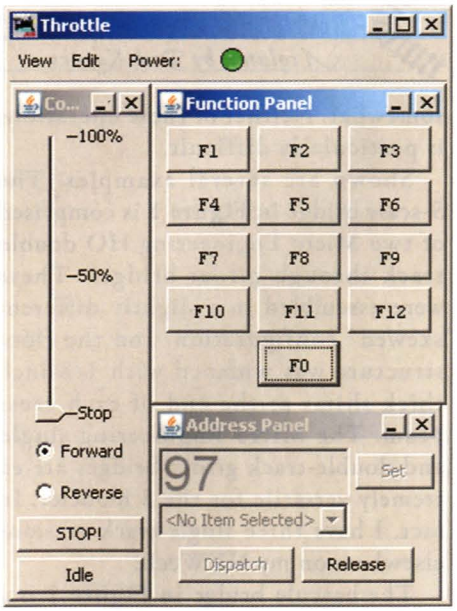

Figure 4 - Panel Pro includes virtual throttles that allow you to manually control a train's speed and direction while sitting at the computer, a feature typically not available to real dispatchers.

defined, clicking on the associated panel button will trigger the route alignment. Although not prototypical, if allowed by your operating rules the dispatcher can control train speed and direction using a virtual throttle, as shown in Figure 4.

STP

The **STP** software package is intended primarily for automated control of your DCC layout and is not well suited for manual control. While you can use STP to display block occupancy status as trains travel the layout and also control turnout position, it does not provide virtual throttle capability so you cannot manually control your train. Further it cannot automatically control the signal aspects, without the execution of routes and lines. As such, we'll postpone discussion of STP until we look at automated computer control.

Coming Next Month

Next month we'll continue with Part 10B of Manual Computer Control with coverage of **Layout Commander** and **Train Controller**. See you then!

Mentioned in this Article:

Panel Pro software (Version 1.8); MSRP $Free

JMRI Freeware

http://jmri.sourceforge.net/

—

STP layout software (Version 5.1); MSRP: $455.00

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Other Resources (Part 2): Bridges

CURVES
FOR AND ABOUT S-GAUGE MODEL RAILROADING
A column by Dick Karnes

THERE AREN'T a lot of bridges marketed as being suitable for S standard gauge. But, believe it or not, the two major dimensions of bridges, length and depth, are scale-independent. Any structural engineer will tell you this. All that matters is the weight of the load that the bridge must sustain for a given span. The mathematical rules are the same no matter whether the bridge is 50 centimeters long or 50 feet long. A large bridge in HO is a medium bridge in S, because both its scale length and scale depth in S are about three-fourths of its scale dimensions in HO. Similarly, a medium O-scale bridge makes an acceptable large bridge in S, and for the same reason. So, for example, Micro Engineering's 50-foot HO girder bridge is perfect as an S-scale 37-foot bridge. For through bridges, the portal dimensions need to be checked to see if they allow S-scale profile equipment to pass, and if not, the portals need to be heightened and/or the bridge needs to be widened somewhat. Neither of these operations is particularly difficult.

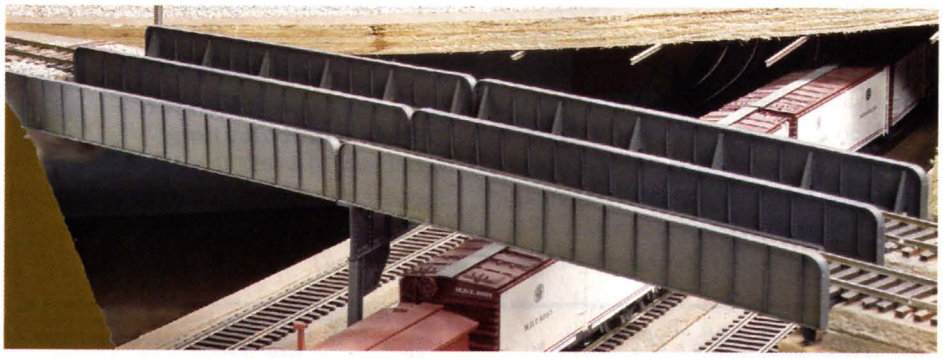

Figure 1: Two Micro Engineering HO double-track girder bridges were assembled in a skewed configuration to make this bridge. Each bridge deck was widened by a quarter inch by using .125 inch styrene spacers.

Shown are several examples. The S-scale bridge in **Figure 1** is comprised of two Micro Engineering HO double-track through girder bridges. These were assembled in a slightly different "skewed" configuration, and the floor structure was widened with 1/8-inch thick shims at the end of each cross beam. The Micro Engineering single- and double-track girder bridges are extremely versatile for the S modeler. In fact, I have three single-track versions elsewhere on my NYW&B.

The bascule bridge in **Figure 2** is a stock Walthers HO kit (unfortunately, no longer offered). The only modification I made was to reduce the depth of the counterweight. Bridge vertical and lateral clearances are sufficient for my 1950-era equipment. Even in S, this is a large bridge!

Figure 3 shows my entryway lift-out

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Figure 2: Everything about this HO bascule bridge, no longer manufactured, is perfect for S. The clearances are consistent with mid-20th century 1:64 scale equipment. The only change I made was strictly cosmetic: I reduced the height of the counterweight by about two scale feet.

Figure 3: This removable S-scale triple-track truss bridge has a plywood track base inside an Atlas "O" double-track truss bridge. The plywood sides of the base have been disguised with girders from the Atlas kit and extra HO Atlas girders. The bridge is removable, spanning a four-foot doorway. The top lattice is yet to be installed, pending construction of catenary within the bridge.

bridge carrying three parallel tracks. The outside tracks have a slight upgrade while the center track is on a downgrade. I built a "skeleton" of plywood to support the trackwork, and then fitted an Atlas O double-track truss bridge to this skeleton. Some extra HO girders completed the bridge. I altered neither the width nor the portal height of the bridge. The O-scale double-track width for modern cars is just right for my three S-scale tracks on 13-foot centers. And I got money back when I sold the surplus O-scale bridge deck tie sections on eBay. **(To be continued...)**

—

Feel free to e-mail any comments or questions about S scale in general to scurves@modelrailroadnews.com or snail-mail them to S-Curves, Model Railroad News, P.O. Box 1080, Merlin, OR 97532-1080. Suggestions, contributions, and announcements are all welcome.

Mentioned in this column:

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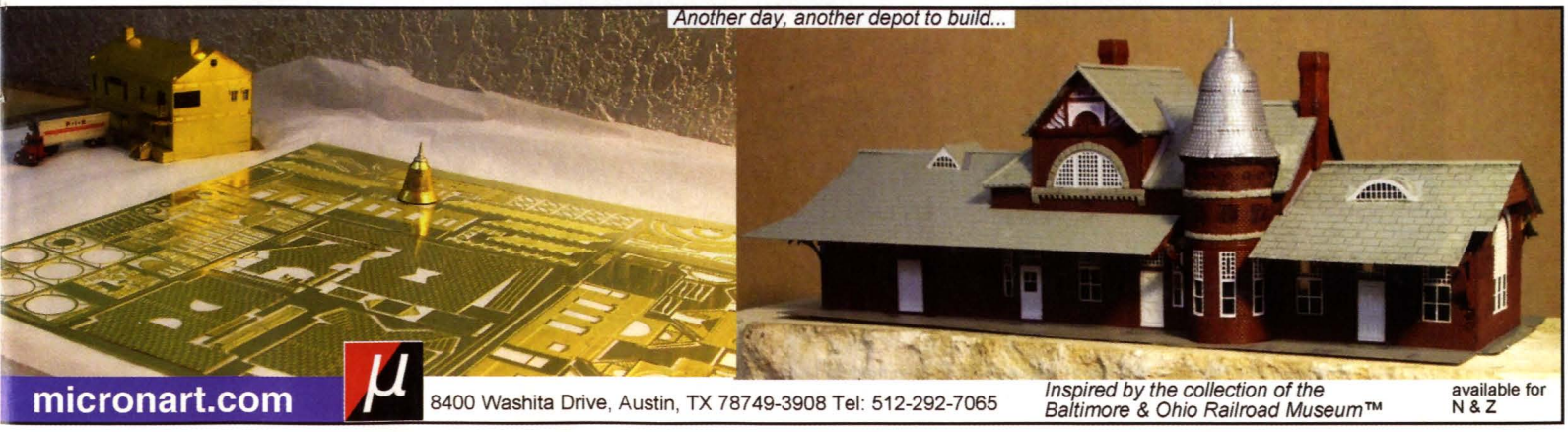
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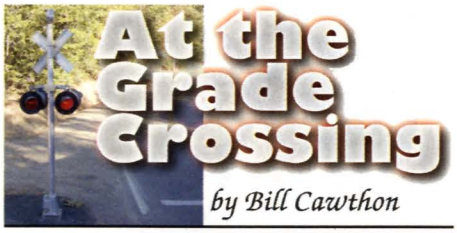

by Bill Cawthon

IN THE APRIL ISSUE of *Model Railroad News*, I wrote about some models from **Brekina**. We got a letter back from a reader berating me for spending so much time on models we couldn't get here in the States. I should have been a bit more clear about the availability of Brekinas, so here goes: While they are not available through one of the major distributors like **Walthers**, **Horizon Hobby**, or **Silvergate**, some Brekina models are available through various retailers.

While I get most of my models from American retailers, I also get a fair number directly from Germany. Some of them come from an exchange I have had for a number of years with *MRN's* European Correspondent, Marc Schmidt. Marc has more connections than the phone company and seems to be able to find almost anything, like the factory promotional items we never see over here. But I also shop in Germany and other countries to get models I can't get here or to save money, and there's no reason you couldn't do the same: as the title of this month's column says, "It's easy to buy in Germany."

Rietze Automodelle is another manufacturer whose products are often hard to find in the U.S. While a lot of their products are of more interest to those who model the European scene, there are some well suited to the North American market. These include the modern Suzuki Grand Vitara and SX4, which are sold in the United States and some nice Fords. The Fords include the Focus in fastback, sedan, and station wagon versions, just as the real car was sold over here, and the Mondeo, which we knew as the Ford Contour and Mercury Mystique. Rietze also makes a Concorde Charisma 840, still the nicest ready-to-run RV model in HO scale, and a suitable stand-in for a small Winnebago in a campground scene.

Rietze has an online store that's super-easy to use. Over here, the Concorde RV is about $35.00; over there, it's 21.50 Euros or about $28.40 at current exchange rates. But wait! There's more! That price includes the 19 percent German MwSt (Mehrwertsteuer), or value-added tax. Since you probably don't live in one of the European Union countries, you don't have to pay the tax; you get a 19 percent discount. Depending on the vendor, you may get the entire discount or you may get an allowance on shipping (Rietze does the latter); you want to be careful of shops that want to charge the VAT and full-fare for shipping, because they are making a tidy extra profit to which they aren't entitled.

To give you an example, I recently ordered some models from Rietze's online store. The total value of my order, including shipping, was $100.86. If I had ordered the same products for delivery in Germany, I would have paid $96.86. So, in essence, I just paid an extra four dollars to have the models delivered to my home in Houston. Shipping took about ten days and everything arrived in perfect condition.

The Rietze web site is available in English as well as German. All you need is a PayPal account (I've used PayPal for years with no problem).

Among the models I got from Rietze was a Neoplan N8012 Metroliner bus I have wanted for a long time. Neoplan built and sold buses through a licensee, Neoplan USA, in the United States from 1981 until the licensee filed bankruptcy in 2006. While most of Neoplan USA's buses were the basic box-on-wheels metropolitan transit bus, the company also sold some of the German designs, which are much more distinctive.

One of the early low-floor buses, the futuristic Metroliner was introduced on May 25, 1988 and was the first-ever full monocoque bus in the world. In other words, it didn't need a separate chassis, relying on its carbon-and-glass-fiber body for structural strength. The result was a bus that was a third lighter than conventional buses and needed only four tires. Bob Lee, the Swiss chief of Neoplan's engineering and styling, designed the groundbreaking bus which was named "Bus of the Year" not long after its introduction. Among the American customers for the Metroliner was the Port Authority of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania.

The Rietze model is a very nice replica; the only real flub I discovered was the model is about five scale inches shorter than the specs I was able to find for the prototype. In terms of width and height, the model is within an inch of specifications.

The futuristic Neoplan Metroliner is one of the Rietze models I have been unable to find in the U.S. Rietze's online store made it easy to add one to my collection.

Modellzentrum Hildesheim's online store is easy to use even if you don't speak German. The latest versions of hard-to-find Brekina models are available, and Americans get not only the store discount but a 19 percent savings because we're exempt from the German VAT. Shown above are a late 1950s Wartburg 311 and an early 1960s Opel Rekord. The prototypes of both models were sold in the U.S.

The tooling is very sharp and well defined; paint and print are excellent. Rietze is known for its bus models and their workmanship is outstanding.

If you don't need a black bus on your layout, the Rietze model is easily disassembled, but care must be taken with the roof, which is very delicate and fragile. Slow and steady is the best method. Be sure to keep your paint light or you may have trouble with the tight fit of the roof and glass insert.

We'll have full reviews of some other Rietze models in upcoming issues of *MRN*.

Don't need a bus? Check out the Ford Focus and Mondeo that start about the equivalent of $9.25 before any discount.

Okay, let's say you want some of those hard-to-find Brekinas. Try Modellzentrum Hildesheim in Hildesheim, Germany.

Modellzentrum Hildesheim is a regular German retail hobby shop that happens to have a worldwide clientele. They discount many products and they do discount the amount of the MwSt for orders shipped outside the European Union. They carry a huge assortment of products, and I have never had a bad experience ordering from them.

Shipping is pretty pricey, starting at the equivalent of $32.33 for a package weighing one kilogram (2.2 pounds) or less but plastic models don't weigh a lot and the savings can still be pretty substantial, making it easy to recoup the shipping costs by buying a group of models at the same time. Now you can have the early-1960s Wartburg 311 (betcha didn't know that brand was sold in the U.S.) or Opel Rekord PII you've been wanting.

They accept Visa and Mastercard.

These are just a couple of sources. Rietze is one of the few manufacturers who sell direct to consumers, but almost every German manufacturer has a list of shops it sells to in Germany. It's a simple matter to go down that list and check out the shops to see if they offer international shipping and what their terms are. Be sure to look for a statement about how they credit the MwSt so you don't wind up overpaying.

One thing I should say: I do buy most of my models from businesses right here in the U.S. I generally use the Internet or visit the same hobby shop I have patronized for almost 20 years. But sometimes they don't have the products I want or it would be ridiculously expensive for them to get them. I can't ask a hobby shop to order 25 pieces of a model so I can have one and the other 24 can be shelf-warmers. On the other hand, it's silly for me to not get the model when it's so easy to order from overseas.

The world is wide open; explore it.

See you next month at the grade crossing!

—

I do enjoy hearing from you and comments and corrections are always welcome. You can send an e-mail to: Gradecrossing@modelrailroadnews.com or snail-mail an actual letter to Grade Crossing, Model Railroad News, P.O. Box 1080, Merlin, OR 97532-1080.

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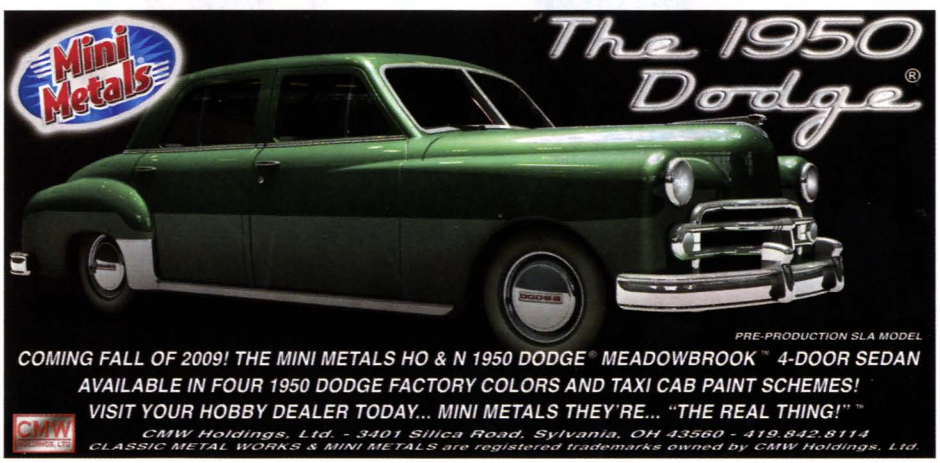
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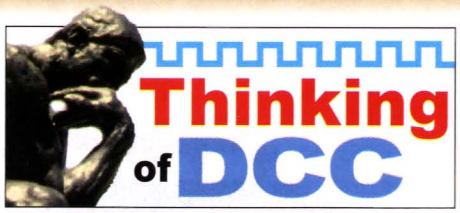
DCC Short Circuit Detection, Part 1



By Dick Bronson

LIKE MANY other model railroaders, I find that trouble shooting short circuits on a layout, even a modest one such as my own, can be one of the most frustrating things we ever need to do. It would be nice if we could magically look into a wire and see the current flowing inside. After one such frustrating situation, I discovered that it is possible to use an inexpensive clamp-on ammeter and a pair of automotive tail light lamps to rapidly track down short circuits on a DCC layout by actually measuring the current flowing in each wire. (This is yet another reason to switch to DCC, as this fast and easy trouble shooting method will not work for conventional DC layouts.)

In the days of DC layouts and cab control I could localize a problem fairly quickly by turning off various block sections until the problem was isolated to one track section. After that it was the usual inspection for derailments, engines across the gaps at a turnout turned against it, etc. For the more esoteric problems, such as spikes shorted to scenery screen wire, gaps that mysteriously close each fall and open in the spring, or switch machine contacts that have touched their frame, it was just plain cut and try, often quite literally!

After building my new LM&PH (Little Mountain and Possum Hollow) Railroad using DCC from the start, I found that instead of making things easier, life actually got more difficult whenever the usual gremlins appeared. Now instead of simply switching off blocks to start localizing my troubles, I found that I needed to crawl around under the layout, disconnecting whole sections of the power bus, to do the usual divide and conquer style of trouble-shooting.

A few months ago our local Charlotte, NC round robin group met at our house. As often seems to be the case, the LM&PH was working admirably about a half hour before the first guests arrived. As soon as the first group descended the basement stairs to the layout room, I proudly announced the first train would depart at 7:30 sharp. I then pressed "Power On" on my throttle, only to be greeted with the familiar 5 beeps from a Digitrax booster indicating a short circuit on the main line portion of my layout.

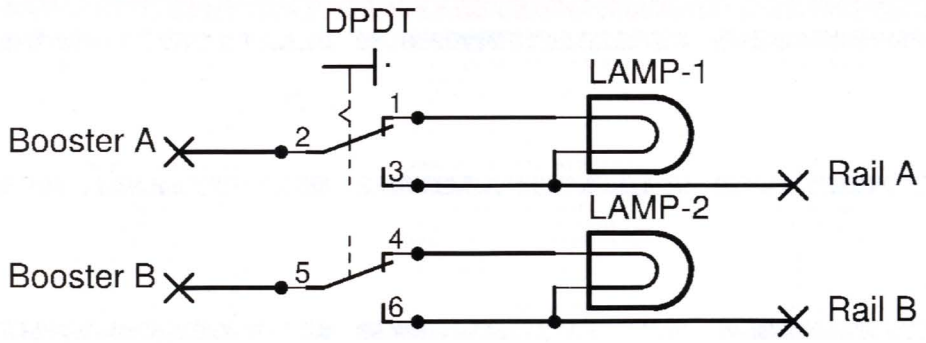
By now others were arriving and the trouble shooting suggestions started flowing (all good natured and sympathetic of course). After removing all the visible rolling stock from a large portion of the layout, and still with no success in finding the trouble, another fellow and I took flashlights, screwdrivers, and test lamps in hand, and disappeared from sight under the bench-work. Over an hour later we finally located one branch of the DCC power bus that, when disconnected, would allow the entire main line to operate once again.

After this all too common situation, I began to wonder if there was some easy way to trace the current flowing in a short circuit without breaking any wires to insert an ammeter.

There are really two different problems to be solved. The first is to allow a safe amount of current to remain flowing continuously through the short circuit, without tripping any DCC circuit breakers or the DCC booster's own over current protection, while you are doing the measurements to track down the problem. The second is to find a way to read the DCC current in a wire without disconnecting or cutting it. Test lights are useless for this because they are indicating the presence of a voltage on the rails. During a short circuit there is no easily measurable voltage present.

The solution to the first problem, keeping a steady safe amount of DCC current flowing through my short circuit for long enough to actually track it down, originally came from Allan Gartner's "Wiring For DCC" web pages. Allan tells how to use common automotive tail light lamps for short circuit protection. This is just what is needed to keep the current safely flowing through a short circuit long enough to track it down. (Warning, see **www.rr-cirkits.com/Notebook/short.**

A typical inexpensive clamp-on ammeter. This one is available from Harbor Freight. We will use a meter similar to this to see if we can detect the DCC current flowing in our layout wiring. Also shown is a basic 1156 automotive lamp. These items are not shown in scale with each other.



Schematic of DPDT switch and #1156 lamp wiring. In one position the power goes directly from the DCC booster to the layout power bus lines. In the other position the lamps are connected in series with each bus line to limit the short circuit current to a safe value while we track down the trouble.

html before using taillights for short circuit protection.)

Of course I still had the second problem to deal with. I knew that the DCC current could be measured by passing it through a transformer, because that is how our RR-CirKits BOD-8 block occupancy detectors operate. Clamp-on style ammeters, made by Amprobe, Fluke, and others, can measure the current flowing in 60 Hz power line circuits. However, they are pretty pricey, and I didn't really expect that they would be of much use with DCC because of the high frequency, low current, and square waveform. Desperate times call for desperate measures, and I decided to try one out in spite of my doubts. Recently, very low cost versions of these clamp-on style ammeters have become available from outlets such as E-bay and Harbor Freight for as little as $10, so the initial investment was not large, and it would always be a useful tool to have even if it didn't work out as planned. (I don't think I have ever met a tool I didn't like.)

I wired a DPDT (Double Pole Double Throw) switch such that in one position the booster 'A' and 'B' leads are each wired in series with a commonly available #1156 automotive tail light lamp. In the other switch position the booster is directly connected to the DCC bus wires. Sure enough, when I re-connected the section of my layout that we had isolated on the night of the open house, both lamps lit up. This indicated to me that the short circuit was between the two bus lines, and not from one line to ground or to another booster district.

The lamps will light when there is a short circuit because the two wires of the DCC power bus are connected together by the short circuit, which places the two lamps in series across the Booster. If only a small current is flowing, for example through lighted cars or parked engines, then there will not be enough current to light the heavy automobile stop light lamps. The reason that both lamps lighting means the short is internal to a power district is as follows. If the mystery short is from one rail to grounded scenery wire, then the return path will be through the scenery ground and back via the booster's ground. This will only light the lamp in the shorted side of the circuit, but with the full booster voltage, and it will be very bright. If the short is between rails in separate power districts, then the return path for the shorted rail is through a different booster and returns through the common ground that should connect your boosters to each other. Again, only one of the two lamps will light, unless you have also enabled the lamps in the second power district. In that case one lamp will light in each power district.

We have solved the first problem, and are now able to allow a safe amount of current to flow through our short circuit long enough to hopefully track it down. Next month we will see if we can actually follow the current from one place to another using our new inexpensive clamp-on meter.

Items required for this project:

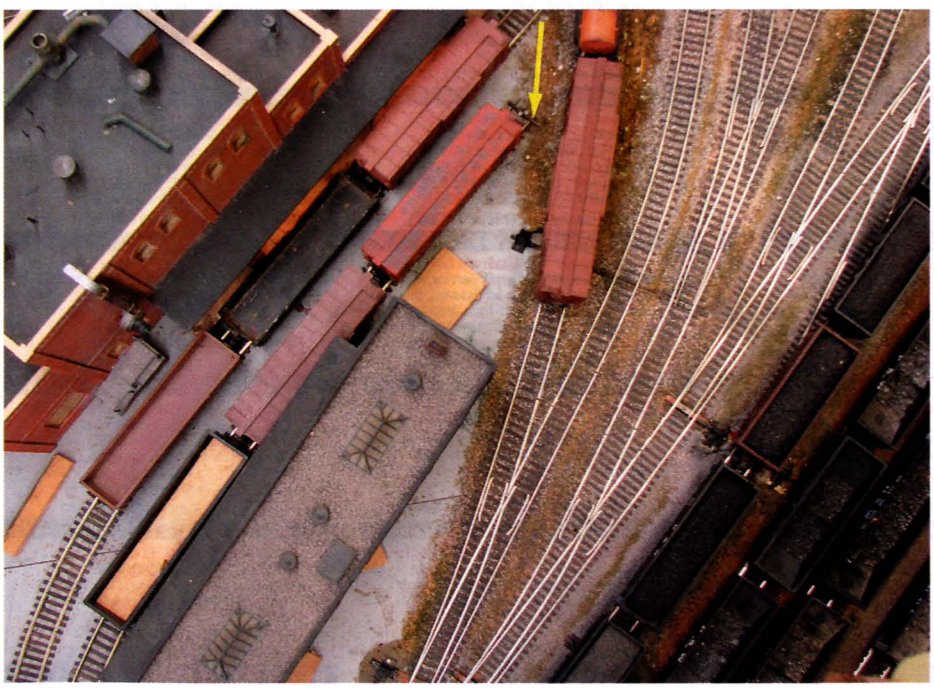
Digital Clamp Meter. Harbor Freight Item 96308 or similar.

DPDT (Double Pole Double Throw) switch with a current rating sufficient to carry your booster's current.

Two each #1156 or #1157 automotive tail lamps. Solder one wire to the brass lamp housing and the other wire to the tip. Be careful to not stress the tip connection. I suggest that you use short (4- to 6-inch) lengths of fine stranded #18 wire for minimum strain and best results. I originally just wired everything together and connected it to my booster. You might want to make some sort of mounting bracket by drilling 1-inch holes for the lamps and a smaller hole to fit your switch. Mount the lamps in the holes using silicon rubber to hold them in place.

—

If you have questions, answers, suggestions, tips, or comments about DCC and the topic in this column, email me at: dcc@modelrailroadnews.com or send a letter to: DCC, c/o Model Railroad News, PO Box 1080, Merlin, OR 97532-1080



The yellow arrow in this image points to a nearly invisible feeder wire connection that caused this entire section of the layout to short out during open houses. The portion of this feeder under the layout had been covered with a lamp fixture making it impossible to see this extraneous feeder from below. Next month we will see how this long-time short was finally tracked down and discovered to be connected to another section of the layout.

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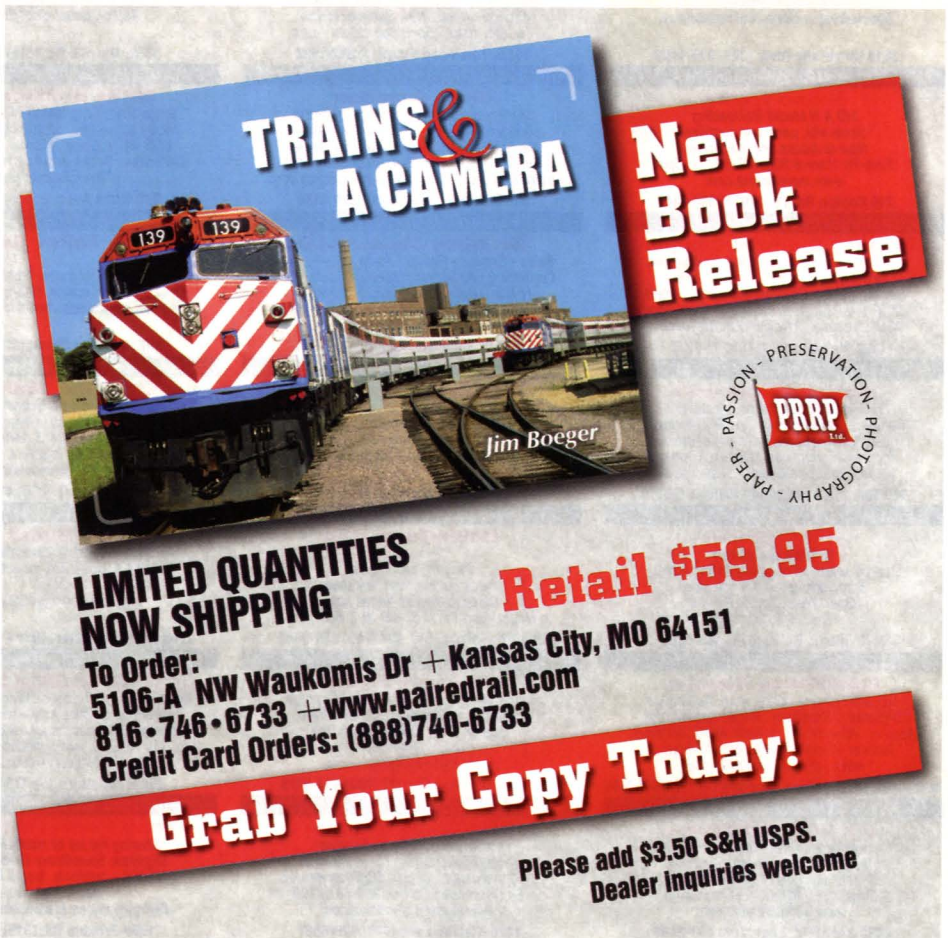

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FOR SALE: HO scale painted figures and die-cast autos. Rock bottom prices. E-mail: texas-pacific@sbcglobal.net

HO AUTOS $3.00 and $4.00. SASE for list: E. Husarik, 12710 54th Ave., W. Mukilteo, WA 98275; (425) 493-2588.

WANTED: Athearn RTR Ford C w/ 28' trailer undec. Stock #: ATH91023. Only need trailer. Ernie, (503) 622-3573.

WANTED: Master Rail Models HO deck girder bridge kits 60 or 90 ft spans. Top $$. Call Rick, (209) 380-5010.

STEAM WHISTLES Brass 1-J.E. Lonergan 7", 1-Lunkenheimer 11", & NP loco bell. Open for bids! Email: railfun@verizon.net

WANT O-27 traditional size NY Central RR items. Send your "For Sale" lists to: hals14@bellsouth.net

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EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

Events for the August 2009 issue must be received by June 12th, 2009

Attn. Clubs & Show Sponsors — Place your FREE event announcement in front of thousands of readers! Let them know about your special event! Send your announcement to us at least three months prior to the event for maximum coverage. Write to: Events, c/o Model Railroad News, P.O. Box 1080, Merlin, OR 97532-1080. You can fax us your event at: (541) 955-0346; or e-mail: events@modelrailroadnews.com

Free trial subscription cards of Model Railroad News are available upon request for show and meet attendees. Call, fax, or e-mail for details.

Events & Activities can be viewed online at www.ModelRailroadNews.com

Arizona, Phoenix — "In The Heat" Railroad Swap Meet will be held on July 25th, at the North Phoenix Baptist Church Fellowship Center, 5757 N. Central Avenue. Hours will be from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Admission: $5.00. Attractions will include everything trains: all gauges, books, tapes, train memorabilia, and accessories. Site has ample parking, is handicap accessible, and refreshments will be available. For more information, contact: David Jerry, (602) 336-0973.

Arizona, Sedona — The Arizona Division/PSR/NMRA Summer Division Meet will be held on June 20th, at Saint John Vianney Catholic Church, 180 Soldiers Pass Road. Hours will be from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Admission: $7.00, adults; $3.00, members under 21; free if joining NMRA/PSR at registration. For more information, contact: Art Carlton, 1898 S. Private Drive, Casa Grande, AZ 85294; (520) 723-9212.

Arkansas, Conway — The Central Arkansas Model Railroad Club (CAMRC) will be having a meeting on June 27th, at McGee Center, 3800 College Avenue. Hours will be from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Attractions to include HO modular layout, and workshops. Admission is free. For more information, contact: Daniel Gladstone, P.O. Box 1825, Conway, AR 72032; (501) 269-3030; e-mail: ca_mrc@yahoo.com; www.artrains.org

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Colorado, Lakewood — The Foothills Society of Model Railroaders' Model Railroad and Toy Train Swap Meet will be held on July 18th, at Christ on the Mountain Church, 13922 W. Utah Avenue. Meet hours will be from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. Admission: $3.00, adults; $1.50, over 64 or under 12. For more information, call George, (303) 989-0087; or Eric, (303) 985-1491.

Delaware, Rehoboth Beach — The Delaware Seaside Railroad Club's Train Show will be held on June 20th, at the Rehoboth Beach Convention Center, 229 Rehoboth Avenue. Hours will be from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Attractions to include over 100 tables of trains and train-related items, and five operating layouts in O, HO, S, N, and G. An operating layout created by 4th and 5th graders of Georgetown Elementary School with the theme of the game Candy Land will also be on display. Admission: $5.00, adults; children 10 and under admitted free with an adult. For more information, call Bill Mixon, at (302) 537-5557; or e-mail: bmix425@aol.com

Florida, Inverness — The Western Division Sunshine Region of the NMRA and the Citrus County Model Railroad Club will be sponsoring the Western Division Sunshine NMRA Mid-Year Mini-Meet on June 20th, at the Citrus County Fairgrounds, 3600 South Florida Avenue (SR 41). Hours will be from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Admission: $10.00; a light lunch will be included. For more information, contact: Erv Sedlock, (352) 527-1612; e-mail: chessnut2@earthlink.net; club's web site: www.citrus-modelrrclub.org

Florida, Largo — Suncoast Model Railroad Club will be holding a Train Show & Club Open House on June 13th. Railroad show will be at Minnreg Hall, 6340 126th Avenue. Hours will be from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Attractions to include over 100 tables of model trains and railroad paraphernalia. Club Open House with operating HO- and N-scale layouts will be at the Suncoast Model Railroad Club House, 12355 62nd Street North, Suite A. Train Show admission: $5.00, adults; $1.00, ages 12-17; under 11 admitted free. Admission to Club House is free. Plenty of free parking is available. For more information, call (727) 523-1860; or e-mail: info@suncoastmrrc.com

Florida, Tallahassee — The Big Bend Model Railroad Association will be sponsoring their annual Tallahassee Model Railroad Show & Sale on June 20th, at the North Florida Fairgrounds, 441 Paul Russell Road, Building #4. Hours will be from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Admission: $5.00, adults; children 12 and under admitted free. For more information, contact: BBMRA Train Show, P.O. Box 3392, Tallahassee, FL 32315-3392; John Sullenberger, (850) 544-1870 (if no answer, leave message on voice mail); e-mail: sullyjws@aol.com; www.bbmra.org

Illinois, Mendota — The Eleventh Annual Railroad Crossing Days will be held June 20 –21st, at the Union Depot Railroad Museum, 703 Main Street. Hours will be from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, and from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Sunday. Attractions to include a free live concert of blue grass/railroad music by Carley & Jackie Hoben on Saturday, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., Fairmont Speeder rides, Morse Code demonstrations, CN/IC Little Obie "railroad safety train rides" (Saturday only), children's activities, and a drawing for Amtrak tickets. General Admission: $2.00; $1.00, Fairmont Speeder Rides. For more information, contact: Jim Carrow, (815) 223-2527; UDRRM office, (815) 538-3800; or Mendota Museum and Historical Society, (815) 539-3373; e-mail: mmhs@mtco.com; www.mendotamuseums.org

Maryland, Baltimore (Towson) — The Baltimore O Scale Society in conjunction with the Baltimore Society of Model Engineers will be sponsoring the 2009 O Scale National Convention to be held June 18-20, at Towson University Student Union, 8000 York Road. Vendor, exhibit, clinic, and contest halls will be open from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., layout tours will be held in the evenings. Attractions will include displays, clinics, dining, and informal chats. O Scale Convention includes 3-rail scale modelers, narrow gauge, trolley, and other renditions of O Scale railroading. For more information, contact: Jerry McCloskey, (410) 340-8917; e-mail: info@oscaleeast.com; www.oscaleeast.com

Maryland, Timonium — The "Great Scale Model Train Show" will be held June 27-28th, at the Maryland State Fairgrounds, 2200 York Road. Show hours will be from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Saturday, and from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Sunday. Attractions will include the Mason-Dixon Large Scale Railroad Society's garden layout, train movies for children and adults, clinics and demonstrations, over 450 tables of model trains, and HiRail/Tinplate trains for sale. Refreshments will be available; parking is free. Admission: $9.00, adults; children under 15 admitted free; $18.00, family. For more information, contact: Howard Zane, 5236 Thunder Hill Road, Columbia, MD 21045; (410) 730-1036; e-mail: hzane1@comcast.net; www.gsmts.com

Missouri, Kirkwood — Train-O-Rama will be held on July 18th, at Concordia Lutheran Church, 505 S. Kirkwood Road. Hours will be from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Admission: $5.00, adults; children under 12 admitted free. For more information, contact: Val Dasho, (314) 835-0257.

New Hampshire, Lincoln — The First White Mountain Railfest Weekend sponsored by the Flying Yankee Restoration Group, *Railfan & Railroad Magazine*, Hobo RR, Café Lafayette Dinner Train, and White Mountain Central RR will be held June 12-14th. Attractions to include Friday night photo shoot session led by R & R Editor Steve Barry, Saturday special excursion on the Hobo RR to Ashland with photo run-bys, visits to the ex B&M Flying Yankee, Saturday Evening Café Lafayette Dinner Train with photo ops, and Sunday a Steam Special using White Mountain Central's Logging Locos. For more information, visit the Flying Yankee web site: www flyingyankee.com

Ohio, Van Wert — The Van Wert County Historical Society will be presenting Railroad Heritage Weekend on July 18-19, at 602 N. Washington Street. Hours will be from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, and from 12:00 noon to 5:00 p.m. on Sunday. Attractions to include operating train layouts in O-scale, HO-scale, and N-scale, vendors, refreshments, and Hobo stew on Saturday. Admission and parking are free. Tour for the Historical Museum is free. For more information, call: Jan Dunlap, (419) 238-4207; or e-mail: snapshotjan@embarqmail.com

Oregon, Medford — The Medford Railroad Park will be open to the public on the second and fourth Sundays of each month, April through October. The Railroad Park is located adjacent to Fire Station No. 4 at the intersection of Table Rock Road and Berrydale Avenue. Hours will be from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The Railroad Park is a unique collaboration between Medford's Parks and Recreation Dept., and five volunteer-based railroad-related clubs. Attractions include a visitors center/museum housed within a restored 1910 caboose, a restored 1942 caboose, a restored 1928 flanger, a handcar ride, a motorcar ride, operating layouts, and the Morse Telegraph Club's antique telegraph system. Admission is free; donations are appreciated. For more information, contact: Dick, (541) 779-3002; e-mail: starkers2@msn.com; or Tony, (541) 944-9176; e-mail: spflimsie@aol.com

Oregon, Portland — The National N Scale Convention will be held June 17-21, at the Red Lion Inn - Jantzen Beach. Convention will begin at 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday. Attractions to include a Live Auction, Home layouts, Prototype tours, 3 Train rides, Columbia Gorge-Timberline Inn tour, and a Saturday night Banquet. Starting Friday they will have 8 Club layouts, clinics, and a public show with N Scale vendors and manufacturers ending with a breakfast Sunday morning. Registration needed to participate in all convention actives: $75.00 for the primary family member; $35.00 and $10.00 registrations for the family. For more information, contact: (610) 923-7535; Dick Ollendorf, Convention Chairman: e-mail: Dick@nscalecollector.com; or Lowell Smith, Regional Chairman, e-mail: Lowell@Lowellsmith.net; or visit www.nationalnscaleconvention.com

Pennsylvania, Strasburg — The Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania, 300 Gap Road, will be offering Barons & Builders, a summer day camp for children, July 13 –17th for children ages 9 and 10, and July 27-31 for children 11 and 12. Camp will be in session from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. daily. Camp activities will include touring equipment in the Museum, riding an Amtrak train, building LEGO train cars to take home, and creating plans for railroads. Admission: $125.00, for Friends of the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania Members; $175.00 for non-members. Participation will be limited to 15 campers per session. Deadline for registration is June 8th. For more information, contact: Elizabeth Myers, (717) 687-8628, ext. 3009; e-mail: programs@rrmuseumpa.org; or visit: www.rrmuseumpa.org

Washington, Bremerton — Bremerton Northern Model Railroad Club will be sponsoring a Swap Meet on June 13th, upstairs at the Knights of Columbus Hall, 2515 Burwell. Hours will be from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Admission: $2.00, donation, adults; children under 12 admitted free. For more information, call: Dan or Marion Weston, (360) 633-7217; or e-mail: marionanddan@live.com

Washington, Ilwaco —The Peninsula Model Railroad Club (all scale) will be sponsoring Clamshell Railroad Days, to be held on July 18-19, at the Columbia Pacific Heritage Museum, 115 East Lake Street. Hours will be from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Attractions to include private, club, and museum operating layouts, with all scales represented from Z to G, sales and swaps, raffles, IR&N tours, and slide presentations. There will also be a new book debut: "*The North Beach Peninsula's IR&N*" with signing by the author. Admission: $5.00, adults; children 12 and under admitted free. For more information, contact: Mark Clemmens, P.O. Box 7, Oysterville, WA 98641; (360) 665-4807; e-mail: markclemmens@hotmail.com

MRN: A Year in Review

As a courtesy to our readers, we have compiled an index featuring every product reviewed in the pages of MRN over the past year. We hope you find it useful.

May 2009

Project DCC, Part 9B: Using Your PC to Control Your Layout
Athearn (N) PS-1 Double Door Boxcars & (HO) Spine Car Set
Atlas O (O) Amtrk Dash 8 & Horizon Passenger Cars
Bachmann (Fn3) 2-6-6-2 Steam Locomotive
Banta (O) Inspection Cab kit for Bachmann 4-4-0
Broadway Limited (HO) Paragon2 C60AC Diesel Locomotive
Busch (HO) *Ape* Delivery Truck & *Smart ForTwo* Car
ExactRails (HO) Gondola, Hy-Cube, & Vert-A-Pack, Plus Interview
Kato (N) EMD E8/E9 Diesel Locomotive
Southcoast Scale Models (HO) Samuel J. Rizzler Paper Co. Kit

April 2009

Project DCC, Part 9A: Computer Control Introduction
Athearn (HO) Genesis SD60M Diesel Locomotive
CMW (HO) Utility Truck
Charles Smiley (DVD) *Your Colorful Southern Pacific*
Kato (N) *Broadway Limited* Passenger Car Set & Add On
MTH (O) Premier Line Dash 8 Diesel Locomotive
Micro-Trains (Z) ACF Passenger Car Set
Piko (Large) Garden Train Set
Rivarossi (HO) 4-8-8-4 *Big Boy* Steam Locomotive
Sunset Models (HO) Brass SP Mogul Steam Locomotive
Walthers (N) Cornerstone Sanding Tower Kit & (HO) *Hiawatha* Set Conclusion

March 2009

Project DCC, Part 8 Integrating a Grade Crossing
Aristo-Craft (L) 2-Bay Hopper
Atlas (N) Code 65 True-Track & (HO) Covered Hopper
Bachmann (On30) Railbus and Trailer & (Book) *E-Z Model Railroads*
Banta (HO, S & O) Railroad Signs
Bar Mills (HO & O) Gas Stop
Bluford Shops (N) Auto Boxcars
Broadway Limited (HO) 2-10-2 Steam Locomotive
Drail Modelspoor (Windows PC) *AnyRail Layout Design Software*
Norscot (HO) Caterpillar D9T Bulldozer
S Helper (S) CNJ Cement Car
USA Trains (1:29) *Docksider* 0-6-0T Steam Locomotive

February 2009

Project DCC, Part 7B Signal System Wiring
Aristo-Craft (DVD) *How Model Trains Are Made*
Atlas O (O) MP15 Locomotive
Bachmann (1:20.3) Davenport Critter Mechanical Locomotive
Broadway Limited C30-7
Digitrax (Z, N & HO) DZ125 Decoder
Kato (N) Southern Pacific PA-1 & PB-1 Diesel Locos & GG1 Electric Locomotive
Lenz (DCC) Lenz Set-100 Starter Set Upgrade
Matysik Display Shelf (Multi Scale) Display Shelves
Old and Weary (HO) Tappan Station
Piko (1:22.5) Taurus Locomotive
Seivers Benchwork (ALL) Benchwork Section Kits
Walthers (HO) H-10-44 Diesel Loco & Everett Street Station

January 2009

Project DCC, Part 7A Signal System Wiring
Special Report: Kader Buys Sada Kan
Athearn (N) F45/FP45 Diesel Locomotive & (HO) Checker Cab
Faller (N) Animated Car System
Grand River Models (S) Greg's Grocery Kit
MRC (DCC) 1820 Sound Decoder for Athearn RS3 Locomotive
MTH (HO) NYC 4-8-2 *Mohawk* & (O) CA-1 Caboose
Signature Press (Book) *Southern Pacific Freight Cars, Vol 5*
Walthers (HO) *Hiawatha* Diner and Tap Lounge & RS-2/RSC-2

December 2008

Aristo-Craft (1:29) 40-Foot Boxcars
Athearn (N) Ford C Rescue Trucks, (HO) CSX & Santa Fe Train Sets, (HO) F-7A/B Diesel Locomotive
Atlas (N) Trainman Train Set
Atlas O (O) Industrial Rail Starter Set
Bachmann (Track) E-Z Command DCC Turnouts
Blair Lines (HO) *Pizzaland* Kit
MTH (HO) Railking Scale Diesel Starter Set
Steamscenes (Calendars) 2009 Railroad Themed Calendars
Piko (HO) ICE-3 Train Set
Tokyo Marui (Z) Night Train Set

November 2008

Project DC, Part 6: Turnout Control Wiring
Athearn, Kato & Walthers (HO) Intermodal Cars
Atlas O (O) Master Line, Train Man & Industrial Rail Freight Car Roundup
Bachmann (Fn3) Boxcar
Charles Smiley (Video) *Key System Scrapbook*
Con-Cor (HO) Union Pacific M-10000
GC Laser (N & HO) Utility Truck Toolbox Kit
Granite Creek (On3) Logging Cars
Noch (HO) Shed/Kiosk Kit
Pine Canyon (S0 Professional Building Kit
Preiser (HO) Vegetable Wagon
Smoky Mountian (S) 41-foot Flat Car Kit
Train Control System (DCC & N) Decoder for "Classic N" Locomotives

October 2008

Special Coverage: MTH/MKT Trade Secret Lawsuit Settled
Project DCC Part 5: Track Assembly, Wiring, & Block Detection
Atlas (N) C420 Diesel Locomotive
Bachmann (HO) Peter Witt-Style Street Car
BVRR Specialties (Tool) Maxi-Grip Screw Starter
Grizzly Mountain Engineering (O) Farmers & Freight Wagons
Kadee (HO) Cushion Underframe Boxcars
Kato (N) Gunderson MAXI-IV Well Cars
Lionel (O) Legacy-Equipped FEF-3 Steam Locomotive
NCE (Electronics) DCC Wireless System
NSLC (Tool) Flamingo Glue
Oak Tree Systems (Electronics) SC-2 Servo Controller
Preiser (O) American Railroad Figures
Ye Olde Huff N Puff (On30) Freight Car Kits

September 2008

Special Coverage: NMRA 2008 National Train Show
Project DCC Part 4: Layout Configuration
Banta/Bachmann (On30) Boxcar Body Conversion Kit
Factory Direct Trains (HO) Trackmobile
Golden West Books (Book) *West Coast Interurbans-California*
Lionel (O) Legacy 990 Command Control System
MTH (HO) GS4 4-8-4 *Daylight* (O) Railking SW1 Diesel Locomotive
Red Caboose (HO) S-40-5 Stock Cars
Smokey Mountain Model Works (S) Ventilated Boxcars
Tomix (N) Freight and Fire Trucks
Wheels of Time (N) Harriman Passenger Cars
Woodland Scenics (O) Scenic Accent Figures

August 2008

Project DCC Part 3: DCC System Familiarization
Allen Keller (DVD) *Great Model Trains Vol. 58*
Aristo-Craft (1:24) C-16 Steam Locomotive
Bachmann (All Scales) DCC Control System, (Fn3) Tank Cars
Brass Trains (Book) *Brass Model Trains Price & Data Guide Vol. 1*
Broadway Limited (HO) Union Pacific Big Boy Steam Locomotive
Intermountain (N) SD45-2 Diesel Locomotive and Wood Deck Flat Car
Kato (N) Daylight Northern 4-8-4 GS 4 Steam Locomotive Set
MTH O) 19th Century Wood Coaches
Sidetrack Laser (HO) Cougar Ridge Lumber Co.
Siflor (All Scales) Landscaping Material
Walthers (HO) Proto 2000 Early EMD Road Switchers

July 2008

Special Coverage: How to Modify Your Old Roundhouse Box Cab
Project DCC Part 2
Athearn (HO) SD40-T Tunnel Motors
Bachmann (On30) Baldwin 4-4-0 American Steam Locomotive
Brass Guide (Book) *Brass Train Guide Book*
First Gear International (HO & O) TD25 Crawler
ESU/Loksound (All Scales) Sound Decoder with Railmaster Hobbies Ported Speakers
ICOM (N) TMC400 Motorcar, Park Set, Park Institution, and Bulldozer
Micro-Trains (N) 40-Foot Drop Bottom Gondola with Woodchip Extension
River Point Station (HO) F-350 Duallies
USA Trains (1:29) Fairmont Speeders

June 2008

Nuremberg International Toy Fair 2008
Project DCC Part 1
Aristo-Craft (1:29) Live Steam 2-8-2 Mikado Steam Locomotive
Athearn (HO) F-850 Flat Bed MOW Trucks
Atlas Trainman (N) Thrall 4759 Covered Hopper and Master Line (N) ACF 5701
Centerflow Plastics Hopper
Blair Line (HO) Gerald Depot Laser-Cut Kit
Broadway Limited (HO) Blueline RSD-14 "Alligator" Diesel Locomotive
Busch (HO) Summer Cottage Built-Up Structure
Castline (S) Auto-Thentic Pontiac Star Chief, Ford Crestliner & Mercury Sun Valley Autos
Charles Smiley (DVD) *Union Pacific Scrapbook*
Great Northern Book Publishing (BOOK) *BNSF Railway Freight Cars Vol 2.*
Marklin (Z) Commodore J1e Hudson Locomotive
Tangent Scale Models (HO) PS-2CD Hoppers
Walthers (N) Proto N GP18 Diesel Locomotive
Weaver Models (O) Head End RPO and Baggage Cars
Western Scale Models Blacksmith Shoppe Craftsman-style Structure Kit

Model Railroad News
Recreating Old-Time Logging Operations in the Garden
Bachmann's new 2-6-6-2 Steam Locomotive — Jewel of the Northwest
Modeling Modern Passenger Lines Just Got Easier!
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Athearn Spine Car a Boon for Intermodal Modelers

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ADVERTING INDEX

A-Line 37
Accurail, Inc. 74
Alpine Division Scale Models, LLC 64
American Limited Models 14
American Models 38
Athearn 11
Atlas Model Railroad Co, Inc. 3
Atlas O 2
BLMA Models 60
BTS 47
Bachmann Industries 100
Bachrus Inc. 68
Blair Line 55
Bollinger Edgerly Scale Trains 61
Brasseur Electric Trains 92
Brassguide.com 98
Broadway Limited Imports, LLC 4-5
Bullfrog Snot 26
CMW Holdings, Ltd. 87
Caboose Hobbies, Inc. 36
California Roadbed Co., Inc. 44
Call To Action 68
Canada G Scale Trains 69
Centerline Products, LLC 63
Central Valley Model Works 16
Coach Yard, The 22
Crusader Rail Services 39
Custom Model Railroads 63
Dallee Electronics, Inc. 45
Design Preservation Models 63
Digitrax, Inc. 81
Downtown Deco 43
Ed's Boxcar 46
Evan Designs 75
ExactRail 7
Fos Scale Limited 60
Four Ways West Publications 75
GC Laser 47
Garden Metal Models, Inc. 61
GarGraves Trackage Corp. 39
Golden Spike Tower 94
Grandt Line Products 64
Great Decals! 75
Great Midwest Train Show 15
Great Scale Model Train Show 20
Great Train Expo 15
Greenberg Shows 15
Greenway Products 45
Heimburger House Publishing Co. 75
Hobby Crafts N More 75
Hobby Loads 47
Hobby Smith, The 67
Hornby USA 13
Hump Yard Purveyance 46
InterMountain Railway Co. 96
Iron Horse Models 42
JV Models 65
John Rendall 65
John's Hobbies 44
Jordan Products 65
KAM Industries 83
Kadee Quality Products Co. 22
Kato 6
Leisure Time Products 43
Litchfield Station 82
MTH 17
Micro-Mark 15
Micron Art 85
Miller Engineering, LLC 29
Model Rectifier Corporation 99
Models11 34
Mokei Imports 57
Mountain Model Imports 42
Musket Miniatures, LLC 26
NCE Corporation 82
NJD Publishing 44
NJ International, Inc. 42
National Association of S Gaugers 84
Oak Tree Systems, LLC 75
Paired Rail Railroad Publications, Ltd. 92
Pennsylvania Heritage Models, Ltd. 84
Precision Scale Co., Inc. 42
RLD Hobbies, LLC 27
RailMaster Hobbies 47
Railroad Press, The 74
Ready To Roll 35
REBOXX, Inc. 85
Ring Engineering 26
Ron's Books 97
S & L Enterprises 44
SJT Enterprises 36
SMC Electronics 21
San Juan Car Co. 61
Scale Card, The 29
Shawmut Car Shops 16
Sidetrack Laser 53
Signature Press 73
Small Shop, The 37
Smartt 67
Smokey Mountain Miniatures 53
Summit USA, LLC 79
Suncoast Model Railroad Club 68
Sylvan Scale Models 55
TAMR 46
Timberline Scenery 65
Tony's Train Xchange 83
Traintek, LLC 15
TrainWorld 21
Underground Railway Press 29
WPG Enterprises 57
Walthers 23
Whistle Stop Trains 92
Woodland Scenics 57, 63, 65
Ye Olde Huff N Puff 46
Zycon Models 87

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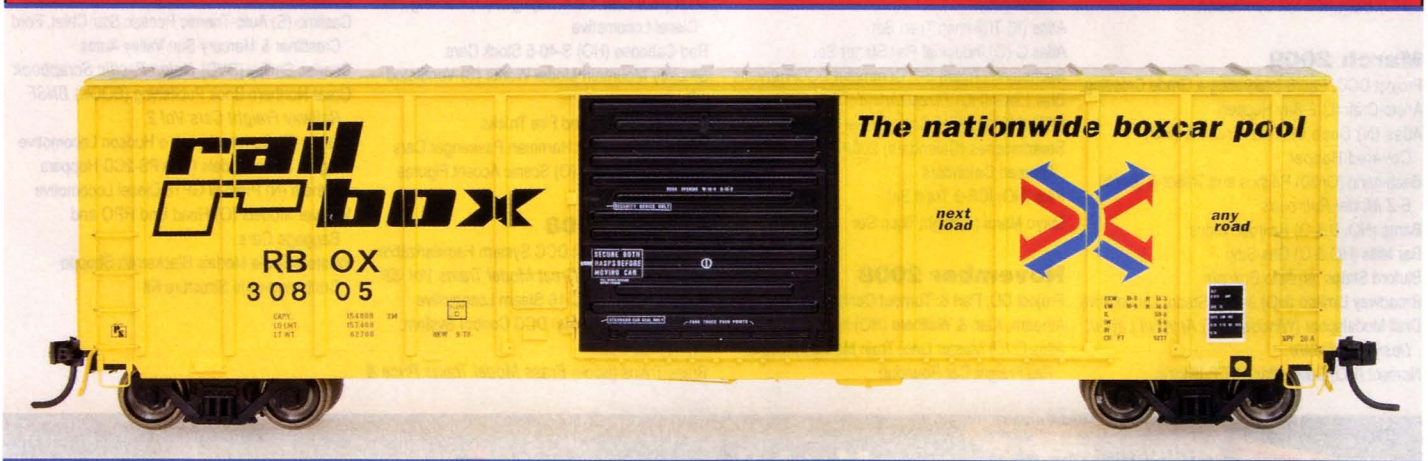

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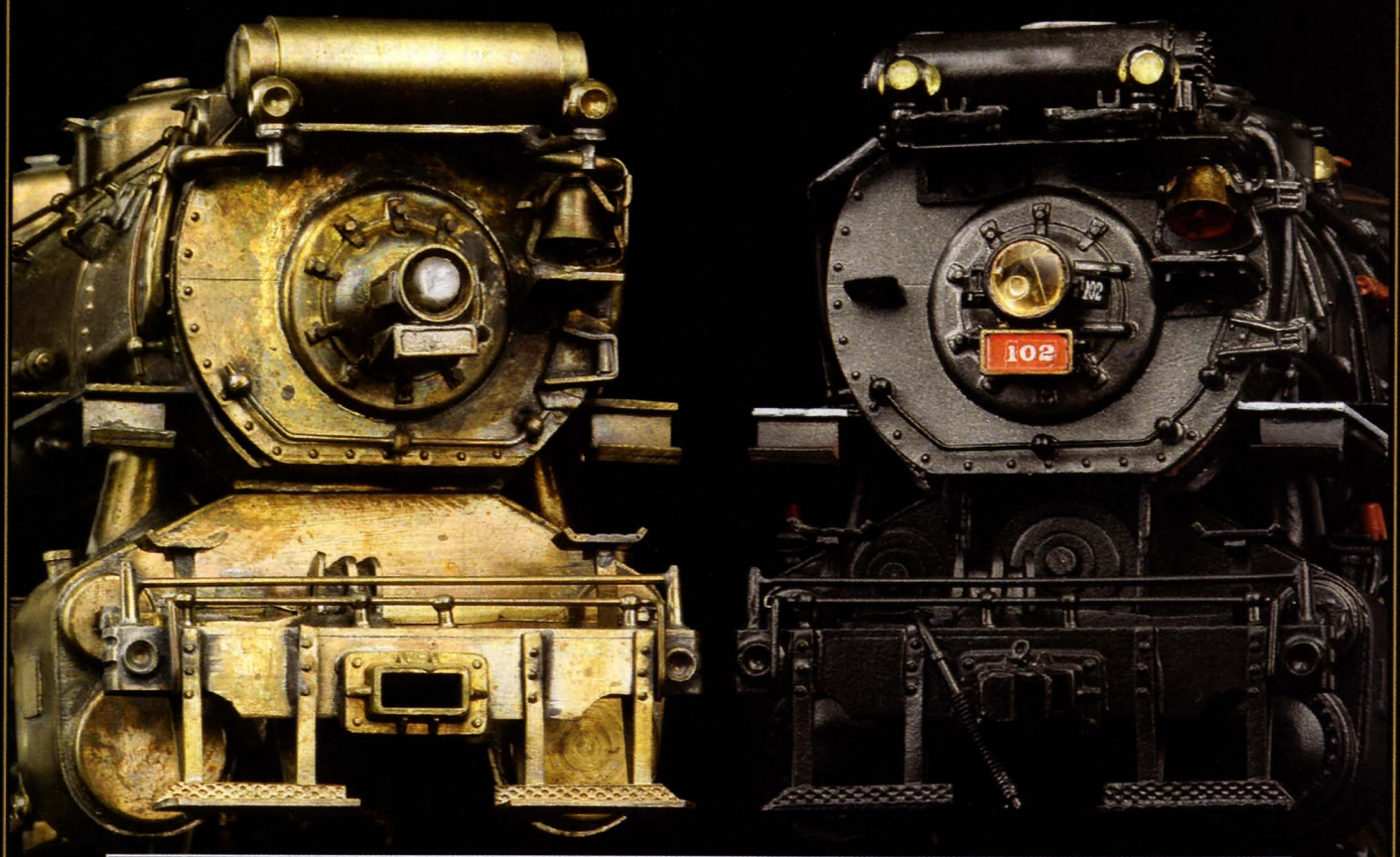

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